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ABSTRACT

A study examined decisions made by parents reading aloud to their first-grade children regarding why they do or do not read aloud, the materials they select and the selection process, and what they do while reading aloud. Subjects, 342 parents of first graders in a suburban elementary school district, were surveyed, with responses received from 83.6%. A subgroup of 16 parents further participated in one or more methods of data collection, such as diaries, interviews, videotaping, and stimulated recalls. Results showed that parents had a variety of purposes for reading aloud, with some intending to make high cognitive demands on children and others intending to develop low-level skills such as decoding. Materials selected and strategies used during reading aloud events were highly influenced by parents' purposes for reading aloud. Reading aloud was found to be "mom's job." Frequency of reading aloud was related to parents' levels of education, ethnicity, and marital statuses, but not by mothers' employment statuses. Storybooks were overwhelmingly identified as the most used genre. Usage of other genres was related to parents' levels of education and ethnicity. The library was the primary source of materials. Based on the decisions parents made about all aspects of the reading aloud process, six categories of parents were identified. (Two figures and 15 tables of data are included; 58 references and 3 appendixes--containing parent surveys and cover letters, a diary page, interview questions, and a list of children's books used in interviews--are attached.) (SR)

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PARENT DECISION MAKING
IN READING ALOUD TO FIRST GRADERS

Eileen Kane Owens

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PARENT DECISION MAKING
IN READING ALOUD TO FIRST GRADERS

Eileen Kane Owens

Submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements of
Doctor of Education
in the Foster G. McGaw Graduate School
National College of Education
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ABSTRACT

The objective of this study was to examine the decisions that parents make when reading aloud to their first-grade children about (a) why they do or do not read to their children, (b) the materials they select and the selection process, and (c) what they do while reading to their children. Multiple data collection methods were employed. 342 parents of first graders in a suburban elementary school district were surveyed about topics such as frequency of reading aloud, genres used in reading aloud, and sources of reading aloud materials. Returns were received from 83.6% of the parents. From that population, a subgroup of 16 parents further participated in one or more methods of data collection (viz., diaries, interviews, videotaping, and stimulated recalls). Reading aloud was found to be "mom's job." It was also found that frequency of reading aloud is related to parents' levels of education, ethnicity, and marital statuses, but not by mothers' employment statuses. Storybooks were overwhelmingly identified as the most used genre among all groups of parents. Usage of other genres was related to parents' levels of education and ethnicity. The library was the primary source of materials. Based on the decisions parents in this study made about all aspects of the reading aloud process, six categories of parents were identified. Metaphors that refer to reading as "mom's job" were assigned to each category. Four categories of parents who still regularly read aloud are called Professionals, Artists, Journeymen, and Laborers. Parents who currently do not regularly read aloud are called Craftsmen and Novices. Parents who exhibit characteristics of more than one category are named Eclectics. This study concluded that parents in this study had a variety of purposes for reading aloud; some were intended to make high cognitive demands on children and others were intended to develop low-level skills such as decoding. It was found that the materials selected and the strategies used during reading aloud events were highly influenced by the purposes parents had for reading aloud.

DEDICATION

This study is dedicated to the memory of two men who influenced me in childhood: my dad, Michael Joseph Kane, who believed in my abilities and then made me believe in myself; and Dr. Frederick Stenn, my neighbor, whose invitation to explore his many worlds of knowledge still continues.

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Chapter I

INTRODUCTION

From the 1920's until the 1970's, the prevailing belief among researchers, educators, and the public was that the acquisition of literacy, or as it was commonly called, learning to read and write, was a process that ideally began with formal instruction in first grade (Durkin, 1989). This belief held that children's home experiences, including those that children had prior to school and during their early school years, had little or no direct influence on children's acquisition of literacy (Teale & Sulzby, 1986). Based on this perspective, no relationship between parents' reading aloud to their children and the children's acquisition of literacy was noted.

Then, in the sixties, research by Durkin (1966) found that not only were some children learning to read before receiving formal instruction in school but the numbers of such early readers were greater than previously believed. Subsequent studies that examined this phenomenon (Clay, 1966; Clark, 1976) found that a relationship existed between the experiences of children at home and their acquisition of literacy. These studies determined that home experiences have a great influence on when and how children learn to read. Indeed, the quality of literacy acquisition in children, how well they learn to read and write, is related to these home experiences (Teale, 1986).

As a result, researchers began to focus on those home experiences that contribute directly to the acquisition of literacy in children (Goodman, 1986). One of these home experiences has been identified as parents reading aloud to their children. A recent review of the literature stated that, while it is neither a universal activity nor a necessary prerequisite for the acquisition of literacy, reading aloud has repeatedly been associated with successfully learning to read (Bloome, 1985).

The benefits that occur when parents read aloud to their children, however, are not limited to learning to read and write. Another review of the literature (Becher, 1986) maintains that, in addition to the acquisition of literacy, reading aloud has an extensive array of benefits, including some that make high cognitive demands on children, such as conceptual development and the improvement of inferential comprehension skills.

The foci of most past studies of this parent/child interaction have been on examining either the actual act of reading aloud itself (Flood, 1977) or its influence on children (Ninio & Bruner, 1978). The role of parents, while not ignored by researchers, has traditionally not been a central topic in the reading research community (Becher, 1986). As a result, little is known about the decisions that parents make prior to and during these reading activities - decisions on **why** parents read to their children, decisions on **what** they read to their children, and decisions on **how** to read to them.

Studies that have focused on why parents read aloud to their children have inconsistent findings. Holdaway (1979) found that parents do not read aloud for educational advantages. On the other hand, Robinson and Sulzby (1983) found that parents have a range of motives for engaging in reading aloud, including educational advantages.

Research that has focused on the materials parents use when reading aloud to their children has primarily targeted children prior to first grade, such as preschoolers (Robinson & Sulzby, 1983) or kindergarteners (Phillips & McNaughton, 1990). Investigations of materials used when reading aloud to first graders is especially warranted in view of the recent findings of Yaden, Smolkin, and Conlon (1989) which found that children's interactions during reading aloud were influenced by the type of materials used.

Research that has focused on decision making during reading aloud to school-aged children has often examined teacher decisions (Martinez & Teale, 1990; Michener, 1989; Morrow, 1988). In contrast, there has been little examination of the decisions parents make as they read aloud to their school-aged children. Since recent research (Edwards, 1989) has found that teachers and mothers interact differently when reading aloud to children, further examinations of parents' decision making in reading aloud is needed.

Furthermore, although first grade has been identified as the traditional grade in which many children learn to read (Durkin, 1989), there are no existing studies that concentrate on examining the motives parents have for reading to children in this particular grade, on the materials selected, and on what parents believe they need to do while reading aloud to their first graders.

Finally, there is a need to learn how parents' decisions in the reading aloud process are affected as changes occur in their first-graders' decoding abilities. Parents of first-grade children make decisions on whether or not the children will replace the parents as primary readers during portions of reading aloud sessions, and, if so, to what extent. The details of this decision making need to be examined.

Purposes of This Study

As previously stated, reading aloud to children has been linked to successfully learning to read; it has also been linked to an additional array of benefits, including some that make high cognitive demands on children. While the belief that reading aloud to young children is beneficial is accepted by researchers, the educational community, and to a large degree, by the general public, there is still much to be learned about this activity. While no one method of reading aloud has been proven to be best, there are, nevertheless, some behaviors that are perceived as being more effective than others (Taylor, 1986). This study will examine the decisions that parents make as to why, what, and how they read to their first-grade children. To do this, the following questions are posed:

1. Why do (or don't) parents read aloud to first graders?

2a. What materials are selected?

2b. How do parents select materials to read aloud to first graders?

3. What do parents believe they need to do while reading to their first graders?

Definition of Key Terms

For purposes of this study, the following definitions of key terms are provided:

Primary reader - This is the person, parent or child, who assumes the role of main reader in a reading aloud event.

Secondary reader - This is the person, parent or child, who assumes a subordinate role during a reading aloud event while another participant is the main reader.

Read aloud - A parent/child interaction in which the adult is the primary reader.

Read aloud sessions - Includes sessions with siblings but excludes reading in group situations such as in school or daycare.

Parents - Is limited to mother or father; is not intended to include other caregivers in the home such as older siblings or grandparents who may also read to the child.

Books - Is not limited to the genre of storybooks; also includes nonfiction books, decontextualized books such as counting and alphabet books, and other written materials targeted for children, such as magazines and poetry.

Chapter II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

This study is investigating the questions of why parents do (or do not) read aloud to first grade children, how parents of first graders select reading materials, what materials are selected, and what first-grade parents believe they need to do while reading aloud. The purpose of this chapter is to review the research and the related literature that is pertinent to these questions.

To accomplish this, the review contains five areas: history of reading aloud, the importance of reading aloud, the selection of materials for reading aloud, parent behaviors/styles during reading aloud, and a summary. More specifically, this review commences with a historical examination of beliefs about literacy development in this century, focusing on the role of reading aloud in children's acquisition of literacy. It then examines the literature on parents' perceptions of the importance of reading aloud to children (research question 1) and the decisions parents make as consequences of those perceptions. These decisions include the selection of materials to be read aloud (research question 2) and parent behaviors during read aloud events (research question 3).

History of Reading Aloud

We live in a print-orientated society in which the degree of participation is largely determined by our level of literacy development. For that reason, parents, educators, and researchers seek more effective ways of encouraging literacy development in our children and believe reading aloud to children to be one such activity. It has been found that a positive connection exists between reading aloud and children's eventual success as independent readers (Ferreiro and Teberosky, 1982).

Teale (1981) reminds us that, as long ago as 1908, E. B. Huey recognized the importance of parents reading aloud to children and wrote that "the secret of it all lies in the parents' reading aloud to and with their child" (p. 332). Unfortunately for children, Huey's words were largely ignored in the intervening years and it is only in the last decade that sustained interest by the academic community has been shown in this topic.

The reasons for this disregard can be appreciated by examining the history of early literacy development throughout this century. Two distinct perspectives of early literacy development have evolved; one is commonly called reading readiness and the other is labeled emergent literacy. Teale and Sulzby (1986) offer a summary of the tenets of each. Reading readiness includes:

1. Children must master a set of basic skills which are prerequisites to reading.

2. Reading is a subject to be taught (this essentially ignores the functional use of reading).

3. What happens to children prior to formal instruction in reading is irrelevant.

This contrasts rather dramatically with some of the tenets of emergent literacy:

1. Literacy development begins long before formal instruction begins. Its roots are in the home.

2. Listening, reading, writing, and speaking are all aspects of literacy and develop concurrently and interrelatedly, not sequentially.

3. Children are active participants in learning.

4. Growth in literacy is developmental but unique for each child.

5. Because literacy develops in real-life settings, the functions as well as forms of literacy development are integral to development.

A review of the research (Durkin, 1989) reveals that the decades of the 20's through the 60's were dominated by the reading readiness perspective. Based on research such as Gesell (1925), Morphett and Washburne (1931), and Dolch and Bloomster (1937), little importance was attached to the role of parents in the development of children's literacy. This perspective prevailed even in the decade of the 70's (Durkin, 1989).

Research in the fifties by Sheldon and Carrillo (1952) touched on the issue of parents reading aloud but did not specifically identify it. One component of their study was a parent questionnaire which asked for the number of books in the home. Sheldon and Carrillo found that as the number of books in the home increased, so did the percent of good readers. They stated that, although they could not determine if this relationship resulted "from the attitude instilled in children by familiarity with books throughout their develomental years" (p. 265), evidence pointed to it as a strong posibility.

It was in the decade of the sixties that major changes in our knowledge of early literacy development occurred. Although change was grounded in the works of cognitive psychologists such as Bruner (1960), it was the seminal research on early readers by Durkin (1966) that caused reading researchers, such as Clay (1966) and Goodman (1967), to focus on literacy events that occurred prior to children's school entry. Durkin's research is a comprehensive study of major importance involving in-depth research in the area of early literacy development (Teale, 1980). What set Durkin's research apart from all that preceded it was her investigation of children's experiences prior to school for signs of literacy acquisition.

Durkin (1966) collected data from two longitudinal studies in the early 1960's: the California Study (which was conducted for six years) and the New York City Study (which was conducted for three years). These two inquiries examined first graders who had been identified as early readers. One criteria of Durkin's definition of early readers was that the children had received no school instruction in reading before learning to read.

To determine what circumstances existed that enabled these young children to come to school already knowing how to read, Durkin focused on the home. Comprehensive parent interviews were conducted to gather demographic information about the families of these early readers and to inquire about various literacy events in the home. Parents were asked if either parent or older siblings or anyone else ever read to the child before kindergarten, and, if so, what materials and procedures were used.

While Durkin did not reach the same conclusions about parents reading aloud to children that hindsight now allows us to make, she nevertheless did conclude that being read to created an interest in reading and attached importance to "the presence of parents who spend time with their children; who read to them" (1966, p. 136). In an enumeration of her main findings, Durkin states that "one frequent source of interest in whole words was the experience of being read to by a parent or an older sibling" (1966, p. 137).

Using Durkin's research as a watershed, a review of subsequent literature reveals that from a trickle in the sixties and seventies (Clay, 1966; Clark, 1976), the topic of parents reading aloud to children has increased considerably in both the number of studies devoted to it and in the importance attached to it. Reading aloud by parents has been specifically identified as a method of enhancing literacy development in young learners (Teale & Sulzby, 1987).

A closer inspection of the available research reveals that many studies exist to inform the academic community of the importance of parents reading to their children (McCormick & Mason, 1984; Teale, 1981). Still additional studies exist which are proffers of advice on how to help parents improve this activity (Topping, 1987; Edwards & Gallego, 1990). However, scant attention has been given to understanding parents' perceptions of the importance of reading aloud or to understanding how these perceptions affect parents' decisions as to the materials selected for reading aloud to their children and what parents choose to do during these reading aloud sessions.

The Importance of Reading Aloud

It is generally accepted among the academic community that reading aloud to children is a practice that promotes literacy development in children. In a review of the literature, Becher (1986) relates that

> specifically, this practice has been shown to improve children's: (a) receptive and expressive vocabularies; (b) literal and inferential comprehension skills; (c) sentence length; (d) letter and symbol recognition; (e) basic conceptual development extension, and

> expansion; and (f) general interest in books....Reading to the child is also important because it promotes a bond between children and parents, and establishes reading as a valued personal activity, exposes and develops shared topics of interest, promotes positive social-emotional interactions among family members, familiarizes children with a variety of language patterns and an expanded vocabulary, and serves as a source of data from which children construct knowledge about rules that govern the reading process. (p. 90)

Although reading aloud has been found to have this extensive array of benefits, an examination of existing research is necessary to determine what reasons parents have for reading to their children. Although Jalongo (1988) claims that skepticism exists among some parents as to the value of reading aloud because it appears to be the adult that is doing all the work, researchers Daisey (1990) and Holdaway (1979) have identified many reasons that parents claim for reading to their children.

Holdaway (1979) purports to have studied "the environment, the practices, and the outcomes of story reading and book handling in homes where these play a significant part in child-rearing" (p. 39). He maintains that parents read to their children for satisfaction and pleasure, not as a duty or for specific educational advantages, and "the major purpose from the parent's point of view is to give pleasure, and the parent is sustained in this behavior by the ample bonuses provided" (p. 39). However, the data that Holdaway presents supports children's independent re-enactments of the stories that have been read to them but does not offer evidence to support his contention that parents read aloud to children for pleasure and satisfaction (Teale, 1981).

More recently, Kastler, Roser, and Hoffman (1987) studied younger siblings of successful first-grade readers. Their goal was to learn what children growing up in homes in which an older sibling had already achieved success in learning to read know about print and, of primary interest to this study, to discover how parents account for their children's success in becoming readers.

One component of their study was parent interviews; these were designed to elicit talk in four literacy-related areas: (1) the literacy environment of the home, (2) the child's patterns of literacy acquisition, (3) the parents' attributions for success in reading, and (4) the parents' expectations for their children in reading.

Data analysis of parent interviews identified three major themes that parents used to describe the setting in which successful readers developed; two are pertinent to this study:

1. Parents valued reading themselves. ("My dad read to me....I can remember as a tiny child he would read big books and I've always loved to read.")
2. Parents made texts available to their children. ("We have lots of books...trillions.")

From these interviews, Kastler et al. (1987) also identified six literacy events these parents described most frequently as being part of their home experiences. Three are of interest here:

1. Parents read aloud to their children. ("Just after one he was having a book a day.")
2. Parents took their children to the library. ("We get 22 books from the library every two weeks.")
3. Parents reported putting their children to bed with books. ("They take them to bed and pile them all around.")

Kastler, Roser and Hoffman (1987) were able to collapse parent attributions for their children's success into five themes, three of which are presented here:

1. Parents modeled an interest/value for reading.
2. Parents believed that reading to children was important.
3. Parents commented on their role in helping and encouraging children to read.

These researchers concluded that "each of the parents interviewed had an implicit theory (i.e., a set of assumptions and beliefs) about reading development that served to guide their nurturing actions" (p. 92). While the researchers themselves were able to conclude that parents in this study read to their children because of an implicit belief that reading aloud fosters literacy development, it cannot be concluded that these parents make decisions based on explicitly held beliefs. Furthermore, while this study found that parents perceive reading aloud to be important, it did not examine how these perceptions affect the reading aloud event itself. Finally, while parents in this study attached value to both reading aloud and to the availability and quantity of children's reading materials, the influence of specific kinds of materials selected on the reading aloud process and the development of literacy were not considered.

In a study of parent-teacher relationships (Silvern, 1985), it was found that, while many parents were aware of the general value of reading aloud to children and stated that teachers often recommended this activity to them, they indicated that they were not aware of specifically how reading aloud contributes to their children's literacy development. Parents did report that reading aloud was an enjoyable activity to share with their children, but most were uncertain as to how they could optimize the reading aloud events. Those parents who were aware of the specific benefits of reading aloud to their children (i.e., increasing expressive and receptive vocabulary, and developing literal and inferential comprehension skills) attached more value to the activity.

In another study, a comparison of the attitudes and perspectives about literacy growth between teachers and parents, one component studied was reading aloud to children (Dalsey, 1990). Questionnaires and focus groups were used to obtain this data. Analysis of the qualitative data revealed that differences in why children were read to were greater between teachers and parents than between socioeconomic groups of parents.

High and low socioeconomic parents overwhelmingly maintained that they read to their children for enjoyment (over 60% of low SES parents and over 80% of high SES parents). The teaching of skills was cited by over 40% of the low SES parents and about 30% of the high SES parents. Reading for information was a distant third and was cited by less than 20% of either group.

When parents' reasons for reading to children are compared with those of teachers, Dalsey (1990) noted some interesting differences, and categorized them as: enjoyment, information, and teaching skills. While both groups cited reading for enjoyment more than the other two purposes (for information and to teach skills) combined, a greater percentage of teachers mentioned reading for enjoyment than did parents. Furthermore, more parents than teachers mentioned teaching skills as a reason to read to children; while more teachers than parents stated that they read for information.

Dalsey (1990) also found that significant differences occurred when participants in this study (both parents and teachers) were asked how parents can help children succeed in school. Eight ways of helping were presented in this study; one of them was reading to children. 60% of K-3 teachers, 40% of the early childhood teachers, 27% of high SES parents and only 7% of low SES parents cited reading to children as a method of maximizing school success.

The historical overview presented in the first part of this review of the literature has revealed that the paradigms of reading in general and reading aloud in particular have changed. Parents are being encouraged more than ever to read to their children. Additional current research is needed to determine parents' current reasons for reading aloud to their children.

The Selection of Materials for Reading Aloud

The second research question of this study addresses the selection of materials to be used in reading aloud, namely, what are the influences on parents' selections of reading aloud materials, and what materials are selected. Because of recent claims such as that of Goodman (1986) (storybooks are a useful source of information about print), and of Smolkin, Conlon and Yaden (1988) (an early focus on print can be attributed to certain types of books with salient print displays), the selection of materials for reading aloud warrants further inquiry.

Phillips and McNaughton (1990) contend that the type of text selected may be a significant "setting event" that influences the content and style of interactions. The types of books selected reflect the literacy practices of the home and are an influence upon the expectations children bring to school. Most studies of the materials used in reading aloud have not clearly defined the types of books used:

> The type of book selected would reflect the adult's cultural theory of literacy and the tasks that define specific social practices. In many studies of book reading there has been a lack of specificity in defining the types of books used (Snow & Ninio, 1986; Teale, 1986). For example, picture books depicting single items and events are often grouped together with storybooks and analyzed as if they are the same (Heath, 1982; Snow, 1983). This lack of specificity confuses descriptions of literacy practices. The data that are available on types of texts selected, which come from studies that were focused on different age groups, suggest that mainstream families shift from an early emphasis on picture books depicting single items and events to a later focus on books with narrative text (Heath, 1982; Snow, 1983). However, little specific information is available on what books are typically selected by whom. (p. 200)

In their study, Phillips and McNaughton (1990) examined reading aloud to preschool children in mainstream New Zealand families. Parents kept a diary of the reading aloud events in the home, recording the time of book reading, who the readers were, who was present, who initiated the session, and who selected the book(s).

Books were classified as either informational or narrative (storybooks): the former conveying item knowledge and including alphabet books, labeling books, and number books; the latter were categorized as narrative if they contained the elements of a story (initial setting, problem, series of actions, final resolution of the problem). Books were further classified as either simple or complex, depending on text features and the relationship between text and illustrations.

Phillips and McNaughton (1990) found that there was considerable consistency across families as to the content of books selected for reading aloud. Most books read to these preschoolers were predominantly storybooks; very few books were selected that presented decontextualized items (alphabet, numbers, colors, and shapes). 56.3% of the books were simple storybooks and 43.7% were catagorized as more complex. An interesting finding was that about 70% of the readings were of different books and only about 36% were repeated readings of the same books. In addition, about 36% of the books read were being read for the first time during this study. In spite of these findings, most parents in this study believed that the majority of the readings were rereadings.

Phillips and McNaughton (1990) concluded that, for the families in their study, reading aloud was a substantial part of family life, and was devoted almost exclusively to the reading and rereading of books of imaginative fiction.

Materials selected for reading aloud by parents was also examined in another study of preschoolers, a longitudinal study (Yaden, Smolkin, & Conlon, 1989) that centered around nine preschoolers' questions about pictures, print conventions, and story text during reading aloud sessions. Audiotape analysis revealed that certain styles of books influenced the reading aloud experience. When the print was highlighted (e.g., speech balloons), some children attended more to the print. Two of the children asked the majority of their graphic form questions when reading books that contained highlighted print. Another child asked the bulk of his graphic form questions when reading an alphabet book. These researchers concluded that an illustration style that outlines and highlights print may actually direct children's attention toward print. Thus it seems that the materials used in reading aloud sessions appear to influence children's literacy development and interactions that occur during the reading aloud sessions.

In a recent observational study (Johnson, Conlon, & Smolkin, 1990), book preferences of kindergarteners were explored to determine the types of books they chose most often during free play in a kindergarten library. The frequency of selection and the time spent reading them were also examined. Thirty books, representing five catagories, were available to the children. The catagories were: (1) Mass market books, such as those found in grocery or discount stores (e.g., Disney, Berenstein Bears), (2) ABC and counting books, (3) Picture books, illustrated, original storybooks intended specifically for children in which the illustrations support and extend the text, (4) Nonfiction books, containing a picture format and designed to inform children about the world around them, and (5) Flap or manipulative books, which open to reveal a hidden picture.

Findings revealed that flap/manipulative books were overwhelmingly selected most frequently (73). Picture books were next (37 times), followed closely by nonfiction selections (35 times). Mass market books were chosen only 19 times and ABC/counting books were rarely selected (2 times). These findings show statistically significant differences among the types of books selected by these children. Not only were certain types of books used more frequently than others but some types of books were used very infrequently. The use of flap/manipulative books was significantly higher than other book types.

Interestingly, although flap/manipulative books were selected more often than other books, Johnson et al. (1990) found that the duration of use for picture storybooks (58 minutes) was much higher than other book types, including flap/manipulative books (42 minutes). The researchers maintain that these results illustate that the kind of books selected can enhance or detract from frequency and duration of book use.

While this study examined school-aged children, it was limited to kindergarteners and was conducted in a school setting. Since first-graders have traditionally been exposed to more reading instruction than kindergarteners, the materials selected by first-grade children may be different.

As part of a longitudinal study of reading behaviors, Robinson and Sulzby (1984) examined children's favorite books, those books that children asked parents to read again and again. This study was also limited to preschoolers. Fifteen parent interviews were conducted to explore three areas: (1) the behaviors of both children and parents when sharing books, (2) parent perceptions of why these books are favorites, and (3) the characteristics of the pool of books in the home.

This study found that parents identified a variety of reasons for books becoming favorites: psychological/developmental; a topic of special interest; a familiarity/preference for the character, the author, or story from past encounters; verbal (questions in the text) or physical (pop-up sections) interactions; a sense of personal ownership of the book.

Parents were also asked to identify the source of their children's books. Thirteen of the 15 maintained that they buy them. Other sources and the number of parents who cited them were: the library (5), siblings (5), school (5), book clubs (4), and grandmothers (2). When asked, "What do you look for when you select a book for your child?", the most frequently mentioned responses were: 12 of the 15 parents cited concern for the children's interest in or understanding of the topics; 5 described specific values that they used;

and, 6 mentioned that illustrations were important.

Interestingly, Robinson and Sulzby (1984) stated that favorite books could not be categorized as children's classics, nor were they award winners (e.g., the Caldecott).

> [They] were mostly inexpensive, softbound, easily acquired books of the sort found in drugstores or supermarkets. It appears as if, for this sample at least, the "critical merit" of the book from an adult viewpoint does not have much to do with a book's being selected by a child as a favorite (p. 58).

The above studies examined the materials used in reading aloud to children and found that some materials selected for use in reading aloud sessions can enhance children's literacy development. It did not determine what influences parents' selections of reading aloud materials, nor did it answer questions about parents' perceptions of the influence of the materials used.

Parent Behaviors/Styles During Reading Aloud

Perceptions motivate behaviors, and parent perceptions and behaviors during the reading aloud process are no exception. Many researchers have examined these behaviors, or styles, of parents and have found that wide variations in behaviors exist among parents as they read to their children.

Guinagh (1971) observed poverty-level mothers as they read to their preschool children (average age was 2 years, 11 months) and rated the interaction. Although all parents used the same book, the interactions were varied, ranging from very thorough and animated descriptions of each illustration to a perfunctory series of questions or comments. In the minimum interaction observed, the parent simply turned each page and said "See, see!" The child's observed behavior in this interaction was described as passive. At the other extreme, the parent asked questions, some of which related the illustrations to the child's life ("Look at the mixer. I'll bet they're making a birthday cake. Remember when mommy made you a birthday cake and how you helped? Do you think that the kitten will get to lick the spoon when the mother is done?")

Guinagh (1971) observed how parents introduced books to children and found that 70% of the parents did not do so. Using a rating scale of 1 to 5 (1 representing a minimum introduction), only 10% of the parents scored 3, 4, or 5. Language specificity was also rated and ranged from vague statements such as, "Look at that." (a score of 1) to the use of very specific desciptive language. Only 18% of the mothers in this study used detailed descriptions of the illustrations.

Guinagh also analyzed the questions parents posed to children. 40% of the parents used a style of reading in which the parent asked a question and then paused and expected the child to answer. A surprising finding of this study was that 48% of the parents did not read any of the words in the book. Interestingly, Guinagh also related that, as the parents discussed various texts in this study with staff members, some mothers related that they had not previously thought of the possible ways that a book could be read to children. Their comments indicated that they saw reading aloud as a dichotomy, either you did or did not. Guinagh's research was limited to poverty-level parents and to preschool-aged children; interviews were not a component of this study.

Roser and Martinez (1985) studied reading aloud sessions at home and in school, in an attempt to better understand both how young children construct meaning and make sense from text, and the roles adults play as they read aloud. They determined that children's and adults' responses tended to be similar in each parent/child dyad (i,e., when a parent directed much attention to the illustration, that child commented more heavily on details in that illustration.)

This study identified three roles that adults play as they read aloud to children: co-responders, informers/monitors, and directors. As co-responders, parents initiated discussions in order to describe information in the pictures, share personal experiences, relate the story to the child's life, and encourage the child to respond similarly. As informers/ monitors, the parents explained aspects of the stories, provided information to broaden the children's knowledge, and evaluated the children's understandings of stories. In the third role, director, parents introduced stories, announced conclusions, and assumed leadership roles in discussions.

Roser and Martinez (1985) found that the children in their study responded with diversity and richness to the literature in read-aloud sessions and that the parents' contribution in these interactions was an important consideration. The methodology of this study was limited to observations of parents and children and did not examine parent perceptions of the roles that adults play as they read aloud to children.

Flood (1977) also examined the role of parents in reading aloud events with prekindergarten children. His study was designed to investigate the relationship between parent behaviors during reading aloud and children's performances on selected prereading related tasks. Read aloud sessions were audiotaped in the homes; parents were simply asked to read in their usual way; no observer was present during the reading aloud sessions.

Analysis led Flood to identify six variables that significantly related to the children's performances, three of which directly refer to parents' behaviors: (1) warm-up preparatory questions asked by the parents, which can both settle children down in preparation for the story and can also stimulate interest in the content of the story; (2) post-story evaluative questions asked by the parents, which complete the cycle of questioning and help children learn assessment, evaluation, and integration; and, (3) positive reinforcement by the parents, which was an effective component of the reading aloud process.

Flood (1977) maintains that children need to be involved in the reading aloud process from beginning to end through interaction with the reader, namely, the parent. Parents' styles can help children to extend ideas, question their understandings, and relate their ideas to experiences. Based on this, Flood concluded that parents' styles of reading are important in teaching children to read.

Citing disadvantages (no visual component, only an audio component) to the data-gathering methods of Flood (1977), and maintaining that the traditional readiness test scores that he used do not measure component skills or processes of reading, Shanahan and Hogan (1983) conducted another investigation of parent reading styles. Instead of a traditional readiness test, they used the Concepts About Print Test (Clay, 1972). Parents were observed reading to their children in home situations; all parents used the same book. In addition, parent interviews were conducted after the read aloud sessions.

Shanahan and Hogan (1983) maintain that parent reading style is highly related to children's print awareness. These researchers identified some aspects of reading aloud events as making substantial and unique contributions to children's print awareness: pre-reading references to the children's prior experiences, answering the children's questions, and the amount of reading aloud. Shanahan and Hogan state that their results indicate "that the more time parents spend reading to their children, the better their children will do on a test of print awareness" (p. 215).

During interviews, some parents stated that the amount they read was determined by their children's interest levels; other parents indicated that their children would not sit and listen to a story. Shanahan and Hogan (1983) also found that a substantial relationship existed between the number of questions answered by parents during the reading session and children's print awareness. Although parent interviews were a component of this study, the content of the interviews was limited to obtaining background information and to asking questions on the frequency and length of reading aloud sessions. Parent perceptions were not a focus of this study.

Snow (1983) identified three parental procedures that facilitate language acquisition: (1) semantic contingency, which involves the parents continuing topics introduced by children, adding new information to the children's utterances, and answering all children's questions; (2) scaffolding, which is the reduction of uncertainty in a task as parents structure dialogue and reduce the possibilities of failure for their children; and (3) accountability, which is the parent's requiring the completion of tasks.

Based on the above research of Snow, Thomas (1985) studied 15 early readers and 15 nonearly readers for evidence of linguistic and social interactions in the home that might account for children learning to read. One component of data collection was interviewing parents. When accounts from parents of early readers were examined for evidence of semantic contingency, Thomas found no instances in which children's questions regarding literacy went unanswered. Furthermore, while parents of both early and nonearly readers read to their children, parents of early readers read to their children more times within a day than did parents of nonearly readers.

Thomas (1985) also found evidence of scaffolding by parents. Parents of early readers structured dialogue to facilitate meaning of the printed word as they read aloud. Interestingly, Thomas also found shifts in the scaffolding process between early readers and their parents. In these cases, the children asked prereading and during-reading questions. Although some nonearly readers also asked questions, it was not to the degree of intensity that was exhibited by the early readers.

The parent procedure of accountability was noted when parents of early readers held children accountable for adult speech, not allowing baby talk. These parents also held their children accountable for recognizing decontextualized print (i.e., "Stop" is the same word in a book at home as it is on a traffic sign).

Thomas (1985) concluded that "this early reading acquisition was both a teaching and learning process that had a systematic approach to it" (p. 473). Surprisingly, parents of early readers in this study denied giving reading instruction to their children. Parent perceptions of how their children learned to read at an early age ranged from not knowing to guessing that their parental styles or nursery schools might be factors. Thomas states that probing during the interviews uncovered numerous instances of parent behaviors that influenced the literacy development of these early readers. Interview questions in this study that examined parent perceptions were limited to parent procedures with preschool children who had received no reading instruction. It did not extend to parent decision making during reading aloud with children who have received reading instruction and are exhibiting some conventional reading behaviors.

According to Heath (1983), parent behavior changes as the child gets older; this is supported by Bloome (1985). Bloome's research was an in-depth study of one mother/preschooler dyad and did not examine phases in reading aloud events between parents and their children who have received formal reading instruction and are exhibiting more conventional reading behaviors.

Videotapes of bedtime story reading events were made of a mother and her two-year-old child. Multiple readings of the same book over a ten-month period were analyzed. In order to analyze the reading aloud sessions, it was necessary to identify and label the various phases of the reading event. Some phrases were "getting together" (mother and child get ready for the story); "telling the story" (reading the text); "child's story", (the child tells a story related to the one in the book); "naming", (the child is asking for a label).

Bloome (1985) noted that phases changed from one reading to another. Phases that were dominant in one reading were not necessarily dominant in the next reading. In addition, phases were frequently added during rereadings. It was also found that not only do phases change but the roles that the parents and children play also undergo changes during multiple rereadings of the same text. For example, the parent attempted to get the child to role play; the child was unwilling and, consequently, the parent reverted to another phase, "naming". Bloome stated that, over the three readings of the same text, "the mother used different sets of sociolinguistic strategies to facilitate child-text interaction and the telling of the story" (p.293).

Bus and van IJzendoorn (1988) examined the relationships among parent-child interactions and written literacy development. The purpose of their study was to determine if parents, anticipating formal reading instruction, attempt to instruct children in reading. One method of data-collection was observations of mothers reading with their children. One finding of the study suggests that a relationship exists between a high degree of mother-child security and reading instruction. Securely attached children tended to explore stories and pictures more than did anxiously attached children.

Another finding of this study is that mothers of children who scored higher on emerging literacy tests paid less attention to narration than other mothers. This includes explanations, questions, and comments about the story and the illustrations; also included are behaviors such as pointing out and naming. These mothers tended to give more reading instruction, which includes explanations, questions, and comments about the formal aspects of written language such as letter/sound correspondence, word identification, naming letters, and spelling words.. Ironically, in informal discussions after the observation sessions, almost every mother denied giving reading instruction to their children. Bus and van IJzendoorn's findings, however, suggest that early reading acquisition is not a natural process but an informal teaching/learning process.

The research cited in this section on parent behaviors/styles indicates that parents exhibit diverse behaviors as they read aloud to their children. Not only do various parents behave differently but individual parents also behave differently as circumstances change (i.e., the children's ages, their interest levels). The research cited above also found that children's literacy development is enhanced in varying degrees by parent behaviors.

Summary

This review of the literature has examined four areas: the history of reading aloud, the importance of reading aloud, the selection of materials for reading aloud, and parent behaviors/styles during reading aloud. A study of the history of reading aloud reveals that a shift in perspective has taken place, that, for the most part, the reading readiness perspective has been replaced by one that espouses emergent literacy.

As a result, this shift to an emergent literacy perspective has brought greater attention to the roles of parents in the development of children's literacy, including parents as readers to their children. This review focused on the reasons parents have for reading aloud to children and found inconsistencies among research studies. It has also been found that parents perceptions of reading aloud differ from those of teachers.

In addition, this review examined the materials used by parents in reading aloud and found that parents have a multitude of reasons for selecting children's books. The research suggests that decisions about reading aloud materials are influenced by factors such as children's interests and children's levels of literacy acquisition.

This review also looked at parent behaviors during reading aloud and found that a wide variety of behaviors exists among parents as they read to their children. It was also found that parent behaviors during reading aloud events influence children's literacy development. This study will attempt to add to what is known about parent decision making in reading aloud to children.

Chapter III

METHODOLOGY

While reading aloud to children has been linked to the development of literacy in children, there is still much to be learned about this activity. This study examines the decisions parents make as to why, what, and how they read to their first grade children. The purpose, therefore, of this research project is to answer the folowing questions:

1. Why do (or don't) parents read aloud to first-graders?

2a. What materials are selected?

2b. How do parents select materials to read aloud to first graders?

3. What do parents believe they need to do while reading to their first graders?

The review of the literature on these questions reveals that a new perspective on how children acquire literacy (emergent literacy) has been identified and that parents reading aloud to their children is an important method of furthering literacy acquisition. Consequently, recent research has focused on examining this role of parents in reading aloud to children. The review of the literature reveals, however, that there is still much to be learned about the decisions that parents make in these reading aloud events. This study attempts to add to what is known about why parents read to their children, what materials are selected, how materials for reading aloud are selected, and what decisions are made by parents during reading aloud activities.

Methodology Used in This Study

Several tools (surveys, diaries, interviews, videotapes, and stimulated recalls) were used to gather information pertaining to these research questions. The purpose of the survey (See Appendix A) was to sample a large group of subjects (342) on a limited number of items pertaining to general aspects about reading aloud in the home, such as how often parents read to their children and the kinds and sources of materials parents use when reading aloud.
The surveys also provided background information on the population being investigated. In addition, the surveys were used to determine which parents would be requested to further participate in subsequent data collection procedures (diaries, interviews, videotapes, and stimulated recalls) designed to obtain more indepth information on reading aloud activities. Finally, the surveys were intended to identify any relationships that may occur between parents' responses to survey items and demographic characteristics of parents.

Diaries, interviews, videotapes, and stimulated recalls were used in this study to gather more detailed information on a small number of parents (16). Diaries, videotapes, and stimulated recalls provided "pictures" of parents' "typical" reading-aloud sessions. Interviews provided indepth information about parents' decisions regarding why and what they read to their children. These four measures provided information pertaining to all questions in this study.

A small pilot study using parents of 96 children in four first-grade classrooms outside of the targeted district was used to refine survey items. In addition, a small pilot study of the diaries and interviews was conducted. As a result of these two pilot studies, changes were made in the surveys and in interview questions.

Participation in the four data-gathering procedures that were employed beyond the survey stage (diaries, interviews, videotapes, and stimulated recalls) varied among the 16 parents who were involved in the study beyond the survey stage. Two parents returned completed diaries but did not participate further; another three parents were interviewed but did not participate in other procedures; eight parents kept diaries and were interviewed; and three parents completed in all four procedures. In all, 14 interviews, 13 diaries, 3 videotapes and 3 stimulated recalls were collected.

Sample

The subjects of this study consisted of the parents of 342 first-grade children in a suburban public elementary school district. All of the children attend one building which services all kindergarten and first-grade students in the district. An advantage of this population is that the influence of the school is fairly equal for all subjects, in that all children and parents have been exposed to one principal and to one building policy. All parents whose children have attended kindergarten and first grade in the district have had an opportunity to participate in the school's home reading program which is an annual event each January. This is a program in which the parents receive information which stresses the importance of reading aloud to children and encourages parents to do so. Parents are requested to record books that they read to their children over a four-week period and to send the list back to the school on a weekly basis.

These 342 first graders are heterogeneously placed in sixteen first-grade classrooms which are divided into three teams. Each team then places its students in homogeneous reading groups. This homogeneity is achieved by the intermixing of students from different classrooms within each team. From top to bottom, the reading groups are: accelerated, proficient, fluent, developing, and emerging.

The student group served by the school is drawn from all sections of a geographically large district. Students also represent a wide range of SES; the largest subgroup is white middle class, the smallest is the black population (2%). In addition, there are growing minority populations of Asian

(6%) and Hispanic (9%) families. Five percent of the population is classified as low-income; although most of this group are Hispanic, some are single-parent white families.

Data Collection and Analysis

To minimize the risks inherent in any one method of descriptive research, a variety of data-gathering procedures was used: surveys, diaries, interviews, videotapes and stimulated recalls.

Parent Surveys

Collection of data commenced with a survey instrument, one of the most common tools used to assess the home reading environment (Shin, 1989). The purposes of the surveys included the identification of parent groups from which individual parents were then selected for further data-gathering and the collection of such information as the frequency of reading aloud, the genres parents use in reading aloud, and the source of reading aloud materials. Surveys also provided background information on the population that participated in the surveys.

Based on the current enrollment records of the school, surveys were mailed to the parents of all 342 first graders (see Appendix A). The surveys requested demographic information, such as years of education of each parent, marital status, and ethnicity of each parent. They also sought to identify the after-school caretakers of these first graders. In addition, parents were also asked who reads to their children and the frequency of this reading aloud. The surveys also requested information on materials used, such as the kinds of books used, the sources of materials, and who selects the materials used in reading aloud.

The surveys were mailed to the parents and included cover letters of explanation (see Appendix A). The support of the school district for this study was reflected in these cover letters. Parents whose children were enrolled in the district's English As A Second Language (ESL) program received this information in Spanish (see Appendix A). Parents were encouraged to give the researcher permission to contact them personally about further participation in this project; 80.4% of the responding parents stated that they would do so. A stamped, addressed return envelope was provided to increase the number of returns. Returns were mailed directly to the researcher's home and not to the school. It was explained to parents that each envelope was numbered only to check responses and that no individual's answers would be shared with anyone. While the original response was over 60%, follow up procedures were initiated which increased the total response to 83.6% of the parents.

A computer program, Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS), was then used to identify frequencies of responses to survey items and to ascertain relationships between variables, such as the education level of the parents and the frequency that they read to their children. The demographic data found in the surveys also provided background information on parents, such as ethnicity and employment status.

Analysis also provided information that was used in the selection of 16 parents for further data collection. These 16 parents were selected from a pool of 242 parent volunteers gathered from the survey and represented various groups of parents that emerged from an analysis of the survey data. Consideration was given to many variables, including parents' genders, levels of education, ethnicity, marital stutuses, employment statuses, and to children's current reading groups. Frequency of reading aloud by both parents and children, the materials used, and the selection processes were also considered. Finally, the surveys were color coded to reflect the reading groups of the children; the color coding was subsequently helpful in the development of parent categories.

Diaries

The second strand of data was the use of diaries by a subgroup of parents (see Appendix B). The purpose of the diaries was to ascertain what materials were selected for reading aloud, how frequently parents read to their first graders, the length and location of individual sessions, the time of day they occurred, who participated, and what information parents decided merited reporting. It was intended that this data gathering strategy would support the research questions on what materials are selected for reading aloud and what parents believe they need to do when reading aloud.

Parents were provided with notebooks for this activity. (see Appendix B). Along with the notebooks, parents received a cover letter (see Appendix B) which contained guidelines for completing the diaries. To minimize influencing parents' responses, these guidelines were kept to a minimum. Parents were encouraged to keep to their normal reading habits during the week they were recordkeeping. Parents were further instructed to include information such as the number of times they read each day, the location and the length of each session, the materials used, and who participated. They were also asked to record salient pieces of information about what occurred during sessions, ("Tell what happened during the session"). Parents were also directed to keep the diaries for seven consecutive days in a week devoid of special events such as holidays or the children's birthdays. By using an entire week, the intent was to sample a typical week's worth of reading aloud activities.

Diaries were distributed to 25 parents who represented various groups of parents identified from the surveys. The selection of these parents was based on both parent-centered and child-centered variables. The former included ethnicity, level of education, employment status, marital status, use of day care, frequency of reading aloud, kinds of materials used, and sources of materials. The latter included first graders' gender, birth order, frequency of reading aloud to parents, and reading group in school.

Diaries were returned by 13 parents. Of these, 11 diaries were completed by parents, 1 was laborously completed by a first grader with a grandparent's assistance, and 1 was completed by an older sibling. It was quite common for the diaries to contain precise information about the sessions (dates and days, the lengths and locations), the materials (titles used, sources of materials, number of times previously read, and who selected the materials), and the participants (who decided to read, who was present). However, only a few journals contained rich descriptions of the sessions (e.g., "....I asked questions along the way to see if he could guess why some things were happening. Some things he could anticipate from the clues - some he could not.") Other journals contained less descriptive entries; some gave only sparse descriptions of the sessions (e.g., "She started out reading half of the book and mom finished. All in all, it was an enjoyable session.") The two journals completed by the first grader and the older sibling were mainly descriptions of the materials used.

Information from the diaries was examined to see what patterns emerged and to get data on the process itself. Patterns included a time of day in which reading frequently took place, the type of materials used, the length of sessions, the frequency of sessions, and who participated. The diaries were also analyzed for information on strategies, such as questioning, extending, relating the story to the child's life, or teaching skills. Validation of information found in these diaries was obtained from interviews, videotapes, and stimulated recalls.

Interviews

Following the completion of the diaries, the same group of 13 parents was contacted for interviews. All but 2 parents, a single-parent father who declined and an Indian mother who left for an extended vacation, were subsequently interviewed. In addition, 3 parents who did not return diaries were also interviewed. These 3 parents consisted of 2 parents who no longer read to their children and 1 parent who reported that the journal had been lost. The former were included to gather data from parents who do not currently read aloud; the latter parent represented an Asian parent with a first grader in a low reading group.

The purpose of these interviews was to confirm information recorded in the diaries, to further validate survey information, and to obtain additional data on parent decision making on why, what, and how to read to first grade children. It was intended that data from the interviews would support all three research questions. Consequently, the focus of these interviews was to understand parent decision making in reading aloud in general, and more specifically, on professed reasons for reading to children, what influences the materials selected, what materials were chosen, and on what parents chose to do when reading aloud.

Interviews were audiotaped; questions for parents who currently read aloud and questions for parents who do not currently read aloud (see Appendix C) were determined by

Patton's criteria for the general interview guide approach, and the standardized open-ended interview (Patton, 1990). Parents with more than one child were reminded that their responses were to center on reading aloud to their first grader, not other siblings. This was easily accomplished when no other siblings participated in the reading aloud sessions. However, when siblings of the first grader participated, it was often necessary to redirect parents several times during the interview.

All of the interviews except one took place in the school. One interview took place in the parent's home; this same interview required the use of an interpreter. During the interviews, samples from different genres of books (see Appendix C) were shown to parents and they were asked to discuss why they would (would not) select these books. Parents' selections gave further information on parental decision making, such as their motives for reading aloud and the rationale for selection of materials.

Parents who participated in these interviews appeared eager to discuss any aspects of their children's literacy development. Without being asked, most parents stated that, if the researcher needed any more help, they would be very willing to participate. Thank you notes were sent to all parents who were interviewed.

Videotapes

A small group of 3 parents who had completed diaries and had also been interviewed was asked to videotape one reading aloud session. All 3 agreed to do so. These 3 parents represented some of the parents groups identified in the surveys; their 3 children were also in different reading groups in school (accelerated or high, developing or average, and emerging or low.) The purpose of these tapings was to provide information that supported data obtained from their diaries and interviews. Another purpose was to gain additional insights into the research question on what parents believe they need to do when reading aloud to first graders.

Stimulated recalls

After videotaping, the strategy of stimulated recall was employed. Parents who had videoptaped were requested to view the videotapes along with the researcher. Parent perceptions of behaviors contained in the tape were sought. Parents were asked questions such as "Why did you do that?", and "What is happening now?" When parents were confronted with a videotape of themselves reading aloud, each reacted in a variety of ways. Reactions included defensiveness, self-criticism, self-awareness, and/or satisfaction. These stimulated recalls were another source of insights into the research question on what parents think they need to do as they read aloud to their children.

Data Analysis

Analysis of the data from the 16 parents who participated beyond the surveys was content analysis, a process described by Patton (1990) as identifying, coding, and categorizing the primary patterns in the data. Each piece of information from the multiple sampling strategies employed in this study (diaries, interviews, videotapes, and stimulated recalls) was first identified and coded; coding always identified the parent who was the source of that particular piece of data.

Next, large charts were used to record the answers parents gave to interview questions (see Figure 1).

Figure 1

Example of First Method of Data Analysis

QUESTION #25: DO YOU BUY BOOKS FROM A BOOKSTORE? WHERE?

J: Yes. Crocodile Pie, Daltons as they give a discount.

A: It's bookstores like K&B, and Crocodile Pie. There's a new one at the mall, Coopersmith. I don't think we've ever bought any there. And the book store by Walgreen's has used books.

T: Sometimes, not very often. I went to the Mall, a bookstore inside the Mall.

Sc: I used to. I don't anymore. We just have so many books.

D: It might be a bookstore like Crown Book Store or Krock's or a Christian book store, or it might be something like K-Mart.

Cl: We used to buy books a lot. But it got to the point where you run out of room. So now we go to the library a lot and do it that way.

Responses to each interview question were recorded on separate charts; pertinent data from the other three sources (diaries, videotapes, and stimulated recalls) were subsequently recorded along with the interview data. While this method of analyzing the data was productive, it produced only discrete pieces of information.

Another method of analyzing the data was initiated (see Figure 2). This time, only one large chart was employed. The chart was divided into sections; each section represented a specific variable. The variables that were selected for placement on the chart were gathered from several sources. The survey, diary, and interview instruments and the literature provided many variables (e.g., "library usage"). In addition, some variables emerged from the data (e.g., "the child is primary reader").

Figure 2

Example of Second Method of Data Analysis

Bookstores	Often	Seldom	Never
	J A O D V St Ol	B O'N Da	Cl Sc Ts Sh M P

Father Regularly Reads Aloud	Yes	No
	A Ol D	J O V St B O'N Da Cl Sc Ts Sh M P

Some variables referred to parents, such as "participation of father in reading aloud," "ethnicity of parents," "levels of education," "mother's employment status," "marital status," "purposes for reading aloud," "frequency of reading aloud," "early reading experiences," "parents current reading", and "attitude toward reading aloud."

Others referred to the children, such as "the child is primary reader," "child's reading group," and "child has own library card." Still other variables referred to the materials being used, and included "use of library," "number of books in home," "use of bookstores," "use of nonfiction," "who selects materials," "use of nonfiction," "chapter book usage," and "difficulty of other reading materials,"

Another strand of variables related to parent behaviours during reading aloud, and included "uses dictionary," "who else is present," "length of sessions," and "phonics instruction." This strand also included "prereading strategies," "during reading strategies," and "post reading strategies."

Based on the color codes that had been used in the surveys to identify parents, parent initials were recorded on the charts in clusters with similar responses, if any, from other parents. For instance, under "bookstores," all parents who frequently purchased materials at bookstores were grouped together. In addition, all parents who only occasionally made purchases at bookstores, and all parents who did not currently buy books at bookstores were each clustered together.

For several variables (e.g., number of books in home libraries), no patterns were found. However, patterns were noted for some variables; clusters of parents who gave similar responses for one variable were frequently found to have given similar responses for other variables. As a result, different kinds of parents-as-readers emerged from the data. Six categories of parents were identified that describe parents in this study who exhibited similar reading aloud characteristics.

Because reading aloud can be described as a job for parents, categories have been assigned names that reflects this: Professionals, Artists, Journeymen, Laborers, Craftsmen, and Novices. Parents who display characteristics of more than one category have been labeled Eclectics. The next chapter discusses these categories in more detail.

Summary

These five types of data yielded information about how parents make decisions about reading aloud to children. First, the surveys provided general information about a large sample of parents and was used to select parents for further data collection. The surveys also provided data on some aspects of reading aloud, such as frequency of reading aloud and materials used in reading aloud. Second, diaries provided "pictures" of typical reading aloud sessions. While diaries yielded knowledge about the logistics of reading aloud sessions (e.g., location of sessions and titles used), most diaries did not produce rich descriptions of individual sessions. Next, interviews yielded more indepth explanations of parents' thought processes. Interviews were rich sources of information on all aspects of reading aloud. Fourth, videotapes provided records of parents actually reading aloud to their children. Finally, stimulated recalls provided data on parents' rationales for and explanations of what occurs during their reading aloud sessions.

Chapter IV

RESULTS

The three research questions posed in this study were central in the analyses of the various data collected. These three questions focus on the decisions that parents make as to why, what, and how they read aloud to their first-grade children. Specifically, the questions are:

1. Why do (or don't) parents read aloud to first graders?

2a. What materials are selected?

2b. How do parents select materials to read aloud to first graders?

3. What do parents believe they need to do while reading to their first graders?

The results of these data analyses are presented in two major sections. The first section examines the data collected in the surveys sent to the parents of all 342 first graders in the school district and presents it in three subheadings. First, a description of this group of parents is constructed from analyses of the data. Then, based on that description and additional survey data, issues related to frequency of reading aloud, and also to materials and the selection of materials is presented. The results of data analyses presented in this section have been rounded to the nearest tenth and therefore do not always equal 100%.

The second section presents the analyses of data from interviews, diaries, videotapes, and stimulated recalls which was gathered from a small group of 16 parents who were selected from the 286 parents who responded to the survey. These 16 parents represented a variety of variables, such as parents' genders, levels of education, ethnicity, marital statuses, empoyment statuses, and children's reading groups. Other variables included frequency of reading aloud by both parents and children, the materials used in reading aloud, and the processes of selecting reading materials.

This second section is composed of six subsections, each of which describes a category of parents-as-readers and introduces those parents who belong to that category. Within each description, each of this study's research questions is examined under a separate subheading. The first subheading examines parents' purposes for reading aloud; the second considers materials for reading aloud and the selection process; and, the third subheading addresses the strategies parents use when reading aloud to their first graders.

While these descriptions in totality are discrete, there are characteristics that overlap from one description to another. Furthermore, while some parental characteristics are believed to be more effective than others, the order of presentation does not imply that a continuum exists.

Finally, no cause and effect relationship between parent descriptions and the reading successes of their children has been established in this study.

Results of Survey Data

Two of the main purposes of the surveys were to provide some background information to better understand the population being investigated, and to identify parent groups from which individual parents would then be selected for further data-gathering. Another purpose was to survey a large number of parents to ascertain whether or not they read aloud to their first graders, and, if so, how frequently. It was also anticipated that information concerning the materials used in reading aloud and the processes used in selecting those materials would also be gathered.

Surveys were sent to the parents of all 342 first graders in the district, and included 22 that were translated into Spanish. Two hundred eighty-six responses (83.6%) were returned, of which 14 (63.6%) were the Spanish version. School records show that 18 (32%) of the 56 parents who did not respond to the survey have a primary language other than English. Of the total, 243 surveys (85.9%) were completed by mothers, 39 (13.8%) were completed by fathers, 1 survey was completed by someone other than a parent and 3 did not indicate the relationship of the person who completed the survey.

Description of Parents

From the data gathered in the surveys, a description of this group of parents was constructed. This description includes information on parents levels of education, employment statuses, daycare usage, marital statuses, ethnic origins, and languages used in speaking and reading. Most of the parents in the district have at least a high school education and about half of the parents have at least a college degree. Just about all fathers work full-time and slightly more than 70% of the mothers work either full-time or part-time. Although there is such a large number of employed mothers, 76.9% of these first-grade children go home after school to a parent. This study also found that 52.0% of the parents have resided in the district for four years or less. The overwhelming majority of the parents in this study (89.8%) are married or remarried.

This survey also gathered information about these parents based on their ethnic backgrounds. Although most of the parents in this study are white (82.2% of mothers, 82.9% of fathers), there are other ethnic groups included in this population, mainly Asian and Hispanic. English is, by far, the most common language spoken in these homes and used in reading aloud to these first-grade children.
A more-detailed description of each of these characteristics is now presented.

Education. As Table 1 shows, 91.6% of the mothers involved in this survey have at least 12 years of education, the equivalent of a high school education. Only 6.6% have lower education levels. Of the mothers in the study, 21.3%

have 12 years of education; 23.8% have some college; 33.6% have the equivalent of a college degree; and, 12.9% have 17 to 22 years of education.

Table 1 also shows the levels of education for the 286 fathers involved in this study. The fathers' levels of education is similar to but higher than those of the mothers in this survey. Only 6.2% of the fathers have less than 12 years of education; most of these are Hispanic fathers. Fourteen percent of the fathers have the equivalent of a high school education. An additional 14.0% of the fathers have 1 to 3 years of college; 33.9% have the equivalent of a college degree; and 26.5% have 17 to 22 years of education.

Table 1

Parents' Levels of Education

Years	Mothers	%	Fathers	%
1 - 8	13	4.5	11	3.8
9 - 11	6	2.1	7	2.4
12	61	21.3	40	14.0
13 - 15	68	23.8	40	14.0
16	96	33.6	97	33.9
17+	37	12.9	76	26.6
Missing data	5	1.7	15	5.2
Total	286		286	

Employment and Caregivers. While almost all fathers work fulltime, an examination of the employment statuses of mothers in this study (see Table 2) shows that 36.4% of the mothers work full-time, 35.0% work part-time, and 26.2% do not work outside the home. Although many of these mothers are employed either part-time or full-time, most of these first graders still come home after school to a parent (76.9%), with the remaining children going to a daycare center, babysitter's house, or home to another adult.

Table 2

Mothers' Employment Statuses

Employment Status	n	%
Fulltime Employment	104	36.4
Parttime Employment	100	35.0
Not Employed Outside of the Home	75	26.2
Missing data	7	2.4
Total	286	

Marital status. Table 3 shows that most of the parents who responded are married (87.4%). Only 2.8% are single; 2.4% of the parents are remarried; and, 6.3% of these parents are divorced. School records show that 32.1% of the 56 parents who did not complete surveys are divorced (15), single-parents (2), or remarried (1).

Ethnic origin. Table 4 displays the ethnic origin of the survey parents. Of the mothers involved in this study, most (82.2%) are white. 8.4% are Asian; 8.0% are Hispanic, and only 1.4% are black. The ethnic origins of the fathers are similar. The majority of the fathers who participated in this survey are also white (82.9%). In addition, 8.0% are Asian, 6.3% are Hispanic, and only 1.7% are black.

Table 3

Parents' Marital Statuses

Marital Status	n	%
Married	250	87.4
Remarried	7	2.4
Single	8	2.8
Divorced	18	6.3
Missing data	3	1.0
Total	286	

Table 4

Ethnic Origins

Ethnic Group	Mothers	%	Fathers	%
White	235	82.2	237	82.9
Asian	24	8.4	23	8.0
Hispanic	23	8.0	18	6.3
Black	4	1.4	5	1.7
Other	0	.0	1	.3
Missing data	0	.0	2	.7
Total	286		286	

Languages. English is overwhelmingly the most common language spoken in these homes (88.8%). Spanish is the next most common (6.3%). Chinese is spoken by 1.7%, and 1.0% of the parents speak Punjabi or Gujarati. However, when these parents read to their children, an even greater percentage (92.3%) read in English.

Following this construction of a description of the parents who responded to the survey, the survey data were examined for information about two areas: first, to learn whether or not these parents read aloud and, if they do, how frequently; and second, to learn about the materials these parents use in reading aloud events with their first graders and the process by which the materials are selected. These two areas are examined in the following two subheadings.

Frequency of Reading Aloud

This section examines whether or not parents read aloud to their children, and if they do, how frequently they do so. Based on those findings, the frequency of reading aloud is crosstabulated with several variables, including mothers' employment statuses, mothers' ethnicity, mothers' levels of education, and mothers' marital statuses. In addition, this section also presents the findings on who else reads to these first graders and how frequently.

When asked whether or not they read aloud to their first graders, the resounding response from this group of parents was affirmative. As shown in Table 5, almost all parents (98.6%) who returned the survey stated that they read aloud to their first graders. Only 1.4% of the parents who answered this survey maintain that they do not read aloud. However, only one of the 286 parents who participated in this survey specifically stated that no one read to his/her first grader.

Furthermore, as displayed in Table 5, 3.1% of the parents read to their children less than once a week. Another 23.4% read one or two times weekly to their first graders. Over 70% of the parents who responded maintained that they read aloud three or more times per week: 30.8% indicated that they read 3 or 4 times a week; 7.3% stated that they read 5 or 6 times weekly; and, almost one third of the parents (32.9%) maintained that they read daily to their children in first grade.

Table 5

Frequency that Parents Read Aloud to Their Children

Times per Week	n	%
0	4	1.4
Less than once a week	9	3.1
1 - 2	67	23.4
3 - 4	88	30.8
5 - 6	21	7.3
Daily	94	32.9
Missing data	3	1.1
Total	286	

Frequency _and_ _employment._ Table 6 displays the frequency of reading aloud to first graders by "mothers' employment." Based on employment, little difference in frequency of reading aloud among the 243 mothers who completed the surveys was found. About 76.7% of all mothers who work full-time read aloud 3 or more times a week to their first grade children; 77.8% of those who work part-time read aloud 3 or more times a week to their first graders; and 77.3% of those mothers who are not employed outside of the home read that frequently.

Table 6

Frequency of Reading Aloud Based on Mothers' Employment

Times Per Week	Full-time		Part-time		At home	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
0	0	.0	0	.0	1	1.5
Less than Once Per Week	4	4.7	0	.0	0	.0
1 - 2	16	18.6	18	21.2	14	21.2
3 - 4	30	34.9	32	37.6	15	22.7
5 - 6	7	8.1	5	5.9	6	9.1
Daily	29	33.7	30	35.3	30	45.5
Total [a]	86		85		66	

[a] Data for 6 mothers is missing.

Frequency and ethnicity. Table 7 shows the frequency of reading to first graders by "mothers' ethnicity." (It is to be noted that the numbers of parents in some ethnic groups are small.) A wide range between the four ethnic groups was found. While 76.2% of the white mothers, 75.0% of black mothers, and 58.3% of Asian mothers read aloud 3 or more times weekly, only 31.8% of Hispanic mothers do. Daily reading was a response of 35.7% of the white mothers, 25.0% of the Asian mothers, 18.2% of the Hispanic mothers, and no black mothers.

Table 7

Frequency of Reading Aloud Based on Mothers' Ethnicity

Times Per Week		White n=235	Asian n=24	Black n=4	Hispanic n=23
0	n	2	1	0	1
	%	.9	4.2	.0	4.3
Less than once per week	n	3	1	0	5
	%	1.3	4.2	.0	21.7
1 - 2	n	49	8	1	9
	%	20.9	33.3	25.0	39.1
3 - 4	n	78	6	2	1
	%	33.2	25.0	50.0	8.7
5 - 6	n	17	2	1	1
	%	7.2	8.3	25.0	4.3
Daily	n	84	6	0	4
	%	35.7	25.0	.0	17.4
Missing data	n	2	0	0	1
	%	.9	.0	.0	4.3

Frequency and education. Table 8 displays the frequency of reading aloud to first graders by "mothers' levels of education." It shows frequency for mothers with 12 or less years of education: 33.3% of mothers with eight years or less education, 50.0% of mothers with some high school, and 62.3% of mothers with the equivalent of a high school education read three or more times per week. It also shows frequency for mothers with more than 12 years of education: 73.5% of mothers with some college education, 81.1% of those with the equivalent of a college degree, and 78.4% of those with graduate levels of education read aloud to their first graders three or more times a week.

Table 8

Frequency of Reading Aloud Based on Mothers' Education

		Years of Education					
		0-8	9-11	12	13-15	16	17+
Times Per Week		n=13	n=6	n=61	n=68	n=96	n=37
0	n	0	1	0	3	0	0
	%	.0	16.7	.0	4.4	.0	.0
Less than 1x week	n	4	0	0	0	3	0
	%	30.8	.0	.0	.0	3.1	.0
1 - 2	n	4	2	22	15	15	8
	%	30.8	33.3	36.1	22.1	15.6	21.6
3 - 4	n	2	2	26	16	31	11
	%	15.4	16.7	42.7	23.5	32.3	29.7
5 - 6	n	0	0	1	3	11	5
	%	.0	.0	1.6	4.4	11.5	13.5
Daily	n	2	1	11	31	36	13
	%	15.4	16.7	18.0	45.6	37.5	35.1
Missing data	n	1	1	1	0	0	0
	%	7.6	16.7	1.6	.0	.0	.0

Note. Data on educational levels/frequency are missing for 5 parents.

Frequency and marital status. Table 9 shows the frequency of reading to first graders by "mothers' marital status." When single-parent mothers (including both divorced and single) who read three or more times per week are compared to married mothers (including both married and remarried) who also read three or more times per week, a greater percentage of the married mothers in this study read more often than do single-parent mothers.

Table 9

Frequency of Reading Aloud Based on Marital Status

Times Per Week	*Single* *n*	*Single* *%*	*Married* *n*	*Married* *%*
0	0	.0	4	1.6
Less than once per week	2	7.7	6	2.3
1 - 2	7	26.9	58	22.6
3 - 4	9	34.6	79	30.7
5 - 6	0	.0	21	8.2
Daily	7	26.9	87	33.9
Missing data	1	3.8	2	.8
Total a	26		257	

a Data on marital statuses for 3 parents are missing.

Others who read aloud. Most of these first-grade children are read to by a variety of other persons. Parents mentioned spouses (67.1%), siblings (15.7%), and grandparents (5.2%) first when asked to identify others who read aloud to their children. In addition, 5.2% of the parents indicated that no one else read to their first graders.

While almost all parents stated that their first graders are read to by someone in addition to themselves, the frequencies of these kinds of reading events are not high. Of the parents who completed surveys, 67.1% stated that other persons read to their first graders less than once a week; 5.2% stated that someone else reads to their children 1 or 2 times a week; and 15.7% maintained that others read 3 or 4 times weekly to their children. Only 4.9% indicated that their children were read to by someone other than themselves 5 or 6 times a week; and only 7.7% stated that someone else read daily to their children.

The children of the parents in this study also read aloud. However, these first graders do not read aloud to their mothers as frequently as the mothers in this study read to their children; 76.1% of the mothers read to their children three or more times weekly while only 58.1% of the children read to their parents that frequently.

Based on parents' ethnic groups, the percentages of parents who read aloud is higher for all four ethnic groups than the percentages of first graders who read aloud. Based on mothers' levels of education, no pattern for reading aloud by the children was found. However, based on marital statuses, a greater percentage of children with single mothers read aloud three or more times a week than did children with married mothers.

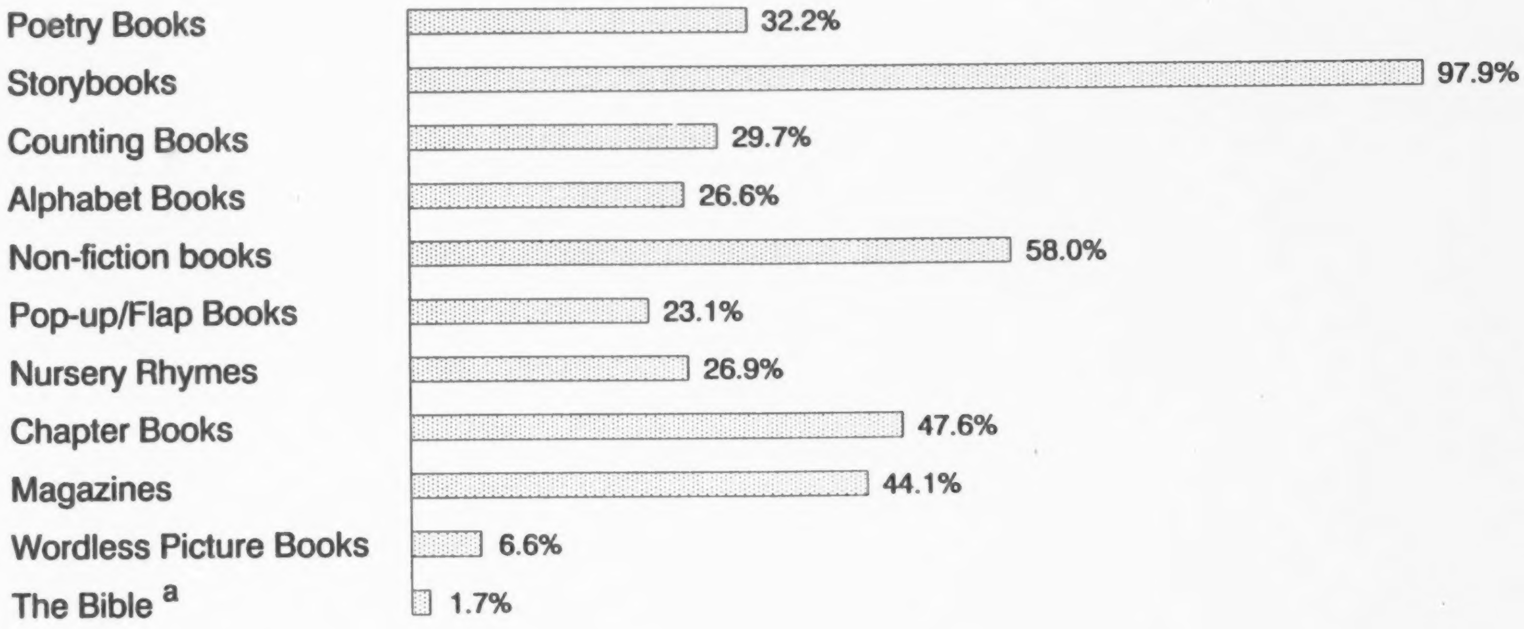
Reading Aloud Materials and the Selection Process

In addition to the above findings on frequency of reading aloud, the surveys also provide information about the materials parents use in reading aloud and the process through which those materials are selected.

Parents were asked to check all of the kinds of books that they currently read to their first graders. Table 10 shows that storybooks were, by far, the most selected genre. 97.9% stated that they use storybooks. Nonfiction, chapter books, and magazines are the next most frequently selected genres: 58.0% of these parents maintained that they use nonfiction materials, 47.6% use chapter books, and 44.1% use magazines. Poetry, counting, alphabet, manipulative, nursery rhymes, and wordless books were each selected by less than one third of the parents as genres used in reading aloud events with their first graders.

Genres and ethnicity. Table 11 shows that some genres are selected more often by some ethnic groups than others genres are. White parents (35.3) were more likely to select poetry books than blacks (25%), Asians (20.8%), or Hispanics (13.0%). While the percentages for using storybooks of all ethnic groups were high, they varied from 100% of black and

Table 10
Genres Used by Parents When Reading Aloud



Note: Parents gave multiple answers; percentages are based on a total of 286 parents

[a] Write-in Response

Asian parents, to 94.5% of white parents, and to 87.0% of Hispanic parents.

The percentages of blcak parents (75.0%) and Hispanic parents (47.8%) who use counting books were far above the percentages of Asian (29.3%) and white (27.2%) parents who use these books. While the percentage of black parents (75.0%) who use alphabet books is high, it is much lower for Hispanic (30.4%), Asian (29.3%), and white (25.1%) parents. Nonfiction materials were used by 75.0% of black parents, 62.1% of white, 37.5% of Asian, and 34.8% of Hispanics.

Manipulative books were not a frequent choice of parents in this study. They were used by 26.1% of Hispanic, 25% of black, 23.8% of white, and 12.5% of Asian parents. The reading of nursery rhymes varied from 50.0% of blacks to 28.5% of white and 20.8% of Asian to a low of 13.0% of Hispanic parents.

The use of chapter books was highest among white parents 51.5%; chapter books were also used by 30.4% of Hispanics, 29.3% of Asians, and 25.5% of blacks. Magazine usage by parents included 75.0% of blacks, 45.5% of whites, 34.8% of Hispanics, and 33.3% of Asians. The use of wordless books was low for all three groups of parents, and included only 16.7% of Asian, 4.3% of Hispanic, 5.1% of white and no black parents. While the Bible was not among the genres listed on the survey, 4.3% of Hispanic parents and 1.7% of white parents added it to their surveys as a kind of book they use in reading aloud events.

Table 11

Genre Usage Based on Ethnicity

	n = 235 White		n = 24 Asian		n = 4 Black		n = 23 Hispanic	
Genre	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Poetry	83	35.3	5	20.8	1	25.0	3	13.0
Storybooks	232	94.5	24	100.0	4	100.0	20	87.0
Counting	64	27.2	7	29.3	3	75.0	11	47.8
Alphabet	59	25.1	7	29.3	3	75.0	7	30.4
Non-fiction	146	62.1	9	37.5	3	75.0	8	34.8
Pop-up/Flap	56	23.8	3	12.5	1	25.0	6	26.1
Nursery R.	67	28.5	5	20.8	2	50.0	3	13.0
Chapter	121	51.5	7	29.3	1	25.0	7	30.4
Magazines	107	45.5	8	33.3	3	75.0	8	34.8
Wordless	12	5.1	4	16.7	0	0.0	1	4.3
Bible [a]	4	1.7	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	4.3

Note. Parents often gave multiple responses; percentages are based on number of parents in each ethnic group.

[a] Write-in response

Table 11 also shows the genres that most parents in each ethnic group use. Three genres, storybooks, non-fiction, and chapter books, are used by 50% or more of white parents. Several genres, including storybooks, counting, alphabet, non-fiction, magazines, and nursery rhymes, were used by 50% of black parents. Storybooks were the only genre used by 50% or more of Asian and Hispanic parents.

Genres and education. Based on mothers' levels of education, Table 12 shows how frequently poetry, nonfiction, and chapter books are used. Poetry books were selected more frequently by parents with 17 or more years of education (43.2%). Generally speaking, the use of non-fiction rises with the levels of mothers' education. Parents in the three groups who have at least some college education are the parents most likely to select chapter books.

Table 12

Percentage of Genre Usage Based on Mothers' Education Levels

	n=13	n=6	n=61	n=68	n=96	n=37
Genre	1-8 Years	9-11 Years	12 Years	13-15 Years	16 Years	17+ Years
Poetry	.0	16.7	29.5	27.9	38.5	43.2
Storybooks	84.6	100.0	100.0	97.1	98.9	100.0
Counting	38.5	66.7	37.7	27.9	23.9	24.3
Alphabet	7.7	33.3	37.7	22.6	22.9	29.7
Non-fiction	30.8	33.3	52.5	51.5	64.6	75.7
Pop-up/Flap	30.8	0.0	24.6	16.2	23.9	32.4
Nursery Rh.	7.7	33.3	40.9	19.1	28.1	24.3
Chapter	15.4	33.3	29.5	55.8	56.2	56.9
Magazines	23.1	16.7	44.3	50.0	41.7	54.1
Wordless	7.7	16.7	6.6	8.8	3.1	10.2
Bible [a]	0.0	16.7	0.0	4.4	1.0	0.0

[a] Write-in response

Based on mothers' levels of education, the percentages of parents who use storybooks was extremely high. The percentage of use for parents with eight years or less education was 84.6%; for all other levels of education, the percentages were at least 97.1%. On the other hand, the use of wordless books was low, regardless of levels of education.

Popularity of genres. Parents in this survey were also asked to identify the one or two genres that they most often use when reading aloud to their first graders. Table 13 displays these findings.

Table 13

Most Popular Genres

Genre	First Choice	%	Second Choice	%
Poetry Books	6	2.1	7	2.4
Storybooks	227	79.4	22	7.7
Counting Books	1	.3	3	1.0
Alphabet Books	5	1.7	4	1.4
Non-fiction Books	15	5.2	38	13.3
Pop-up or Flap Books	0	.0	1	.3
Nursery Rhymes	1	.3	7	2.4
Chapter Books	13	4.5	37	12.9
Magazines	2	.7	9	3.1
Wordless Books	0	.0	1	.3
The Bible a	2	.7	3	1.0
Newspaper a	0	.0	1	.3
Missing data	14	4.9	153	53.5 b
Total	286		286	

a Write-in Responses

b Most parents named only one genre.

According to the parents' first-mentioned responses, storybooks were the most popular choice; 79.4% of parents selected storybooks as their first response. About half of the parents mentioned a second genre. The genres most often selected were nonfiction and chapter books, 13.3% of parents named nonfiction materials and 12.9% identified chapter books.

When the data from the first-mentioned responses is combined with the data from second-mentioned responses, the results overwhelmingly support storybooks as the genre most used by parents as they read to their first graders. The combined data show that 249 of the 286 parents selected storybooks as commonly used reading materials. Nonfiction and chapter books are the next most commonly used books.

Sources of materials. Table 14 shows that libraries are, by far, the most mentioned sources of materials. About one third of these parents stated that their books are from their home libraries. In addition, 26.6% of parents responded "store" while 14.3% specifically identified bookstores as sources of reading materials. Another 11.5% stated that bookclubs are sources of books while 8.7% claimed that books they use have been gifts. Only 2.1% of parents mentioned magazines as sources of the materials they use when reading aloud to their children.

Table 14

Sources of Reading Aloud Materials

Source	n	%
Library a	257	90.0
Store	76	26.6
Bookstore b	41	14.3
Book Clubs	33	11.5
Gifts	25	8.7
Magazines	6	2.1
Home Library	93	32.5
Church	1	.3

Note. Parents often gave multiple responses; percentages are based on a total of 286 parents.

a Includes public and school libraries.

b Includes 1 ethnic and 1 Chinese bookstore.

Persons who select materials. This survey also asked parents to identify all individuals who select the books used in reading aloud. Table 15 shows that the selection of materials for reading aloud is often a joint venture between parents and children; 75.2% selected "Parent/Child." In addition, 43.4% of parents checked "Parent," and 55.6% selected "Child." Only 7.3% of these parents checked "Teacher."

Table 15

Persons Who Select Books Used in Reading Aloud

Person	n	%
Parent	124	43.4
Child	162	55.6
Parent/Child	215	75.2
Teacher	21	7.3
Other	17	5.9

Note. Parents gave multiple responses.

Results of All Other Data

Based on the survey data, a group of parents was invited to further participate in this study. In selecting these parents, consideration was given to many variables, including parents' genders, levels of education, ethnicity, marital statuses, employment statuses, and to children's current reading groups. Consideration was also given to frequency of reading aloud by both parents and children, the materials used in reading aloud and the processes of selecting reading materials.

Eventually, additional data were collected from 16 parents through diaries, interviews, videotapes, and/or stimulated recalls. From this additional data, variables emerged. For some variables, such as the number of books that are owned, no patterns were observed. However, for several variables, clusters of parents were found. Based on these clusters, six categories of parents-as-readers were created.

To facilitate distinguishing one group of parents-as-readers from another, metaphors have been selected. Since "reading aloud to children" could be seen as a kind of job for parents, the use of "job" metaphors seemed appropriate. Consequently, six metaphors were chosen; four identify categories of parents who currently read to their first-grade children, and two represent categories of parents who do not regularly read to their first graders. For those parents who read to their first graders, the job metaphors of Professionals, Artists, Journeymen, and Laborers have been chosen. For those parents who currently do not regularly read to their first graders, the metaphors of Craftsmen and Novices have been selected.

Each of the six parent categories begins with a description of the category, and then two or more parents are introduced and represent the category. Finally, based on the research questions central to this study, each parent category presents data based on parents' purposes for reading aloud, on the materials used and their sources, and on the strategies used in reading aloud events.

Based on analyses of the data collected from individual parents, this section will highlight the characteristics that identify these six categories of parents-as-readers. Some of these characteristics are found in more than one category. Furthermore, while some characteristics are believed to be more effective than others, the order of presentation does not imply a preference for one category over another, nor does it indicate a relationship between parents' reading aloud and the reading successes of their children in school.

The Professionals

Professionals are defined as persons who have great skill in a specified role; they are highly informed about their field. In general, the term Professionals also connotates overtones of mental work. When the term Professionals is used to describe a group of parents who read aloud to their children, it is to highlight the expertise about reading aloud that these parents possess. In addition, the term Professionals is meant to highlight a double emphasis on higher cognitive processes. These parents operate on a high cognitive level as they create reading aloud events; similarly, they demand higher-level thinking from their children as they participate in these events. Professionals are achievement orientated; their children are successful in school and they perceive reading aloud as a means to continue these school successes.

Professionals are parents who take the development of their children's literacy very seriously. They consciously establish goals for these reading events, and call upon their vast repertoire of skills to attain these goals. They know where they want reading aloud to take their children and they know how to get them there. They are not easily satisfied;

instead, they continuously strive to improve.

For Professionals, the materials and strategies that are used in reading aloud are crucial elements and are the recipients of much reflective thinking. They often scrutinize several books before selecting the ones that best serve their needs. A wide variety of strategies is employed by Professionals, many of which make high cognitive demands on their children.

Reading in general plays an important role in the daily lives of Professionals; reading aloud to their first graders is one manifestation of this. Professionals actively participate in their first graders' reading experiences by retaining their positions as primary readers in reading aloud events. Their children are not replacing them as readers but are joining them as readers. By continuing as primary readers, Professionals are able to create reading aloud events that encourage intellectual and academic growth at levels that would not be possible for first graders to participate in through independent reading activities.

This section presents profiles of three Professionals, and then examines data related to the three research questions. This includes data on parents' purposes for reading aloud to their first graders. It also includes the materials they use and their sources. Lastly, the strategies used by Professionals for these reading aloud sessions are discussed.

Parent profile: Mrs. Gordon. This parent has an

Associate of Arts degree, and describes herself as a full-time homemaker. Mrs. Gordon is married to a college graduate who is employed in the communications industry. She has two sons, one is ten and the other, a first grader, is seven and is in the accelerated reading group.

Mrs. Gordon does not recall any early reading experiences from her own childhood. She maintains that it was events later in life that influenced her current attitudes about reading aloud to children. She traces these current attitudes about reading to an event that occured in early adulthood, to a job which required extensive reading.

Mrs. Gordon is a voracious reader whose interests demand a broad range of materials. "I read People, Newsweek, U.S News and World Report. I was just taking a course (Computer Graphics) so I was doing a lot of technical reading, textbook reading. For enjoyment, I'm hooked on Stephen King. Good thing he writes as quickly as he does; I just get through with one and go on to the next....I'll buy things like Everything I Wanted To Know I Learned In Kindergarten, something that catches my eye." She stated that "next to my bedstand, oh my God, I've got books and books, and magazines and newspapers and articles. But I have to read something before I go to bed."

Mrs. Gordon routinely reads chapter books to her first grader about 45 minutes a night. Almost invariably, it is Mrs. Gordon who is the reader. Neither her husband nor her older son participate in these reading aloud sessions.

During the day, this first grader engages in other kinds of reading, including independent reading and other reading events with his mother.

Parent profile: Mrs. Anderson. Mrs. Anderson is a college graduate and is employed part-time in a clerical position. She is married to a college administrator and has two daughters, a ten year old and a seven year old who is in first grade and the accelerated reading group.

When asked to recall some of her personal early reading experiences, Mrs. Anderson said, "What I remember the most is that both of my parents are readers. They would read. I remember that more than reading to me, although I know that they did (read to me) because I remember a couple of fairy tale books and things that we had."

Mrs. Anderson is another reader who uses a variety of reading materials. She maintains that "I like to read. We get the newspaper, magazines. I'm a psychology major, so I read quite a bit that comes out in that area. I do like novels and things. I mostly read those at someone's recommendation, rather than picking them out."

Mrs. Anderson's read-aloud routine is erratic, "....if we have a chapter book going, we read more." When chapter books are being used, Mr. Anderson often is the reader in these events. While this is a common practice for this family, it is not a common practice for most others. Neither the first grader nor her older sister participate as readers when chapter books are being read. When they are not reading a chapter book, Mrs. Anderson may read to her daughter but, more often, her first grader engages in independent bedtime reading or is read to by her older sister. This first grader also participates in other reading events throughout the daytime, especially independent reading.

Parent profile: Mrs. Shin. Mrs. Shin and her husband were born and raised in Taiwan; their primary language is Chinese. She has a Master of Science degree, and he has a Ph.D. Mrs. Shin is not employed outside of the home. The Shins have two children, a son in kindergarten and a daughter in first grade who is in an accelerated reading program. Although English is the primary language of both children, they are also fluent in Chinese.

Mrs. Shin stated that she was not read to by her parents who were teachers "because my parents were quite busy. I don't remember their reading story to me. Sometimes they just tell stories but not read from the books." She does recall that "I read Chinese books and we had a whole set. I mean, in that time, it was not very common to have lots of books. But my father liked kids to read and he liked to read, too. So we had a little library of our own. We subscribed to several magazines and children's newspaper. We had some books translated from English or Danish, or folk tale." Mrs. Shin's current personal reading includes "lots of things. I read Chinese books and some novels from library."

Mrs. Shin was the only parent who participated in this study beyond the survey stage who was integrating two languages into reading aloud activities. Because of these bi-cultural influences, Mrs. Shin's reading aloud events are influenced by the language being used. Bedtime reading, which is usually in English, includes the two children together; Mrs. Shin is the primary reader, neither her husband nor her children join her as bedtime readers. Daytime reading aloud in English is limited to Mrs. Shin and her younger child, a kindergartener. She also frequently reads to both of the children during the daytime in Chinese.

This first grader also reads to her mother but, most often, reads independently. Mrs. Shin laughingly explained, "Alice kind of read faster than I did, so (when) I read (to) her, (she would say), 'I'm finished already.' It's not fun to read to her because she reads faster than me any more!"

Purposes for reading aloud. Professionals have multiple purposes for reading aloud to their first-grade children. Among them are stimulating the intellectual and academic growth of their children, developing desirable character traits, strengthening interfamilial relationships, and unwinding before sleep.

The primary purpose Professionals have for reading aloud to their first-grade children is grounded in an awareness of the intellectual and academic benefits that can be realized from such activities. It is this purpose that most clearly defines Professionals. Professionals are consciously aware of the potential intellectual and academic gains that can be realized from reading aloud events and calculatingly structure reading aloud events to maximize opportunities for their development. Mrs. Anderson believes she can "stimulate their own imaginations with the reading." Mrs. Gordon finds that reading aloud "helped with their vocabulary." For Mrs. Shin, reading aloud, which is "sometimes English, sometimes Chinese," is a tool to develop bilingualism.

Interestingly, the development of decoding skills was not cited by Professionals as an academic goal of these reading sessions with their first graders. All of their first-grade children are members of the school's accelerated reading group. Highly developed decoding skills are a prerequisite for that reading group. Instead of focusing on decoding, Professionals focus on comprehension, on understanding the content of the reading material. In the video of Mrs. Gordon reading to her child, the strategies that were employed, such as predicting and questioning, demonstrated this emphasis on comprehension as opposed to decoding.

A journal entry of Mrs. Gordon's illustrates her preoccupation with developing intellectual and academic gains and her disinterest in providing opportunities for decoding: "Jonathan brought the book with him and was reading it when I returned to the car after dropping off my other son. He told me what he had read and what had happened. I read to him. We discussed the pictures. We finished the book and I asked him how he had liked it, what he had liked. I told him what

I found interesting about the book."

A second purpose for reading aloud is the development of desirable character traits. Professionals structure reading aloud sessions into opportunities for providing concrete examples of abstract qualities. Mrs. Gordon stated that "the one thing that I was hoping that we would get out of reading, is learning compassion. I don't know how to teach my children about compassion. And I was hoping that through some of the stories we could talk about why somebody did this or how they felt." Mrs. Anderson shares this purpose, maintaining that "a major goal in reading is to build positive character qualities in children."

Another purpose for reading aloud is to further develop personal relationships between the children and other family members. These relationships may range from a dyad of one parent and one child to all family members. One parent, Mrs. Gordon, described reading aloud sessions that were limited to her first grader and her as "a nice quiet time for just us to spend together. If nothing else, it's the time that we look forward to being together. It's the closeness." When asked how she thought her child felt, she said, "He loves it!. It's such a nice time. We put our arms around each other and cuddle in here."

Another parent, Mrs. Anderson, described reading aloud sessions that included all family members as a "time when we would stop and laugh together about different things that happened, or make little comments to one another. So it's a shared experience that way." Mrs. Anderson's reading aloud is not confined to these family reading events. It also includes mother/child sessions.

For Mrs. Shin, bedtime reading is also used to develop interfamilial relationships. "We're just having fun," she stated.

A final purpose for reading aloud is the use of reading as a bedtime activity, as Mrs. Shin explains, "to put them to sleep." Mrs. Anderson finds that "it helps to unwind after the day so that you can fall asleep a little more easily and not be still going fast in your mind and in your thoughts...."

Reading aloud materials and the selection process. An examination of both the processes used by Professionals to choose materials for reading aloud and the actual materials used while reading offers additional insights into this group of parents. While some goals of Professionals, such as developing interfamilial relationships and preparing for sleep are not highly dependent on the specific materials used, the goals of stimulating intellectual and academic growth and of developing desirable character traits are more dependent on the materials being used. It is these latter goals that largely define the materials and the selection processes of Professionals. Consequently, determining which books will be used for reading aloud is not a haphazard activity for these parents but is a very selective and conscious process.

The criteria used by Professionals when selecting reading materials for their first graders is dependent on the contexts in which the materials are used. The materials selected by Professionals for use when they are the primary readers are different from the materials that are used in other reading events in which their first graders participate, such as independent reading or paired reading. Mrs. Gordon maintains that when she is the primary reader, books with a "more complex story line, bigger vocabulary" are used.

For Mrs. Shin, the materials selected are highly context-dependent. When reading in English, Mrs. Shin often uses easy-to-read chapter books, such as Encyclopedia Brown (by D. J. Sobol) and simple Bible stories. When describing her favorite English children's book, Amelia Bedelia (by P. Parish), Mrs. Shin stated, "Amelia Bedelia, it's so funny and lots of words. I think sometimes I get confused with the words." Books that are used by her first grader in independent reading include more challenging chapter books, such as Little House On the Prairie (by L. I. Wilder), African folk tales, and information books, such as books about the senses. When Mrs. Shin reads in Chinese, books have more complex story lines, such as those found in Chinese folk tales.

The selection of materials is not a tacit process; it is conscious decision making. Professionals deliberately choose materials that will help them achieve their goals. To achieve academic and intellectual growth, Professionals select materials that are challenging. A remark made by Mrs. Gordon illustrates this. "When I'm reading to him, he can understand a lot more than he can read. So I've got to take into account, am I going to be reading?"

Professionals are very aware of the high level of the materials that they select. When describing the reading level of a book that had been recently used for family reading, Mrs. Anderson stated that "I don't know if it's adult, maybe it's like high school though, definitely through adult. We've always maybe pushed books. I'm always careful with the kinds of books they read. But the classical ones, we maybe read them a year or two before they're ready for them...." At another point in our interview, as we were discussing chapter books, Mrs. Anderson pointed to a chapter book on the table, Winnie the Pooh by A. A. Milne, and stated, "We do read those and they do now like them. When....I started reading those several years ago....the vocabulary was really beyond them." A further example of parental awareness of the level of materials is seen as Mrs. Anderson describes her first grader's behavior during family reading sessions. "She doesn't do other things unless it's a book that we're reading, all of us, and it's over her head. Then she'll daydream and won't pay attention. But if we're reading a book that's at her level, she doesn't get a doll or do anything else. She listens, if it's at her level."

In accordance with their desires to present desirable character traits through books that was described above. Professionals are mindful of this as they select reading materials. Mrs. Anderson stated that she prefers "books that talk about positive character qualities and that teach them to be faithful and kind...."

When selecting materials for reading aloud to their first graders, Professionals devote much time and thought to this activity. Mrs. Gordon states that "I have to do a lot of talking to people and friends, have to look over a lot of reviews of books to find out what's apropriate for him...." Mrs. Anderson noted that "when we heard Anne of Green Gables was going to be on public television, we read the book first."

Professionals select books from a variety of sources. Some are ordered from or purchased from bookstores. Others are borrowed from the public library. Used books from garage sales or used book stores are another source. Mrs. Shin explained that most of the books that she has purchased have been "bought from the library, the annuyal book selling, and that's a big event." Both Mrs. Anderson and Mrs. Gordon stated that, when they can't find specific books that they want in stores, they order the books from book stores. Mrs. Anderson explained, "Some we bought, some are birthday gifts. My husband's travelling, he would buy them Berenstain Bears, some of those kinds of books. Used books stores, a couple of times we've gone in there and gotten books. And then, of course, the library. We do buy them."

Authorship also figures prominently in selecting books. Mrs. Gordon maintains that "some of the authors that I recognize, if they're stories that we really enjoyed, we'll just continue through the series." Gifts are still another source. When asked by others for gift suggestions, Professionals frequently suggest books. Professionals are not dependent on the school library for materials that are used in parent-as-primary-reader sessions.

In addition to the process that are used to select reading aloud materials, this group of parents is also defined by the actual materials that are used. Chapter books, particularily those chapter books customarily meant for older children, are the genre most commonly used by Professionals to achieve their goals. Chapter books that the Andersons have recently used during family reading sessions include Anne of Green Gables by L. M. Montgomery, The Indians in the Cupboard by L. Reid Banks, and Sarah, Plain and Tall by P. MacLachlan. Chapter books that Mrs.Gordon has used lately include Socks by Beverly Cleary and Superfudge by Judy Blume. These books are customarily found on reading lists intended for readers older than first-grade children. Because of this, Mrs. Gordon finds that she cannnot base her selections on the age recomendations given for a particular book. "I'm not sure when it says age level, what is apropriate."

When reading aloud materials are selected that are highly challenging, such as chapter books, they are almost always selected by the Professional. Books for reading aloud which have been selected by the children are usually not as challenging. Some that were mentioned during interviews include easy readers, such as Uncle Wiggily (by H. Garis), Amelia Bedelia (by P. Parish), and Horton Hatches An Egg (by Dr. Seuss).

Strategies used when reading aloud. Parents who are described as Professionals employ a wide array of strategies as they read aloud. When Professionals are the primary readers, extensive use of prereading, during reading, and post reading strategies occurs. In addition to this quantity, these strategies commonly involve the use of higher-level thinking. These two components, the extensive repertoire and the frequent use of higher-level strategies, are characteristic of this group.

Mrs. Gordon's prereading strategies are multiple and elaborate. Before Mrs. Gordon reads to her first grader, her son and she may examine the cover illustration, discuss the title, recall other books by the same author, read the inside flap and back cover, and/or make predictions about the contents.

As they read, Professionals continue to use strategies that demand higher-level thinking. One of Mrs. Anderson's journal entries is reminiscent of a K-W-L (a reading strategy commonly used with nonfiction materials which requires the reader to determine prior knowledge of the topic, what knowledge will be sought, and finally, what has been learned.) In her journal, Mrs. Anderson described what occurred during the reading of a nonfiction book on polar bears, writing that "We had discussion throughout of things we knew or didn't know from other sources."

Other strategies that require higher-level thinking, such as questioning and predicting, were also frequently found to be characteristics of the Professionals. Mrs. Shin asks, "What would I do if I were the person in the story?" Mrs. Gordon's during-reading strategies include predicting ("What do you think is going to happen next? That's always a good question.") and questioning ("Why did he do this?" "Was it a good thing to do?"). In addition, her first grader "...is always stopping and asking questions or talking." On the videotape, higher-level questioning by her first grader was noted when he asked, "How would they know that that was your human name?" At another point, he predicted that "I'll bet there's going to be a full moon!"

This use of the above strategies as they read, such as questioning and predicting, is a conscious act for Professionals. Mrs. Gordon explained, "I asked questions along the way to see if he could guess why some things were happening. Some things he could anticipate from the clues - some he could not." At another point, she stated that "Things come to you. You get these ideas and say, 'Let's try this. It didn't work. Let's try something else.'"

Videotaping also provided an example of Professionals using reading aloud to develop desirable character traits.

Mrs. Gordon, in an attempt to develop the trait of truthfulness, asked her son, "He's doing a great deal of lying. Is that a good idea or not?" Her first grader explains the character's actions, giving justification for lying. Although she obviously disagrees with him, she demonstrates respect for his ideas and does not offer a rebuttal at that time. Later, at another point in the story, she tells her son, "Lying is lying."

Relating reading materials to experiences in children's lives or to other books is another strategy. Mrs. Shin described two incidents. In a story about a bully, her first grader commented, "Yeah. I know that person!" On another occasion, while reading a Chinese story in which "the bad guy dumped the garbage into the ocean," her first grader said, "Oh, I read a book about throwing plastic bags into the ocean....It's like that boy. They shouldn't do that."

Another strategy employed by Mrs. Gordon is rereading a book. She claims that when they reread a book in six months or a year, new learning occurs, they always get something new from it. She believes that maturity influences the rereading and it's like reading a new book.

An additional strategy used during reading aloud that identifies Professionals is dictionary use to understand the meaning of a word in context. In this study, only Professionals specifically mentioned using the dictionary in their reading aloud interactions. A journal entry of Mrs. Anderson's stated that "we had to look up a word neither of us knew the meaning of." During a stimulated recall, Mrs. Gordon explained that, although context is routinely used to understand a new word, when "I feel that I can't explain it to him as well as I'd like to .... we'll stop and look it up in the dictionary." She cautioned that this strategy is not used, however, when she feels that it would "break the mood" during a story.

Teaching decoding strategies is not a current goal of Professionals as they read aloud to their first graders. Indeed, all of their first graders are in accelerated reading groups. Mrs. Shin's disregard for this is apparent in bedtime reading sesssions. The children are each in their beds in adjoining rooms while Mrs. Shin sits in the hallway. The children see neither the print nor the illustrations as they are being read to.

However, when her child was two and three, Mrs. Shin did give instruction. Mrs. Shin described that instruction, stating, "She'll say "What are they talking about?' I'll read to her and point to the words and that's when she started learning to read by herself."

The participation of the first graders of Professionals in these parents-as-readers sessions varies. Although Mrs. Gordon's child rarely reads during these sessions, she does provide opportunities that encourage him to be an active participant. The vidoetape showed Mrs. Gordon tickling her child's ear as she read "The werewolf's ear started to itch." Not only does he interact with his mother as she reads, he also directly communicates with story characters, on one occasion warning a werewolf by yelling "Put your clothes back on!"

Mrs. Shin also provides opportunities for her first grader to actively participate by encouraging dialogue between her child and herself. Mrs. Shin claims that this parent/child dialogue allows her to "know how they are thinking and some words, they don't understand. If they read by themselves, I assume they know what it means but when I read out loud, they say, 'What does that mean?'" Mrs. Shin claims that this dialogue helps her to know what her children "understand of a situation."

Contrary to her active participation during the use of the polar bear book mentioned above, Mrs. Anderson does not provide similar opportunities during family reading sessions. Mother states that "she is quiet. I've learned when I first had children, I didn't really like a story to be interrupted with questions. I think cause I was more used to reading a story straight through. But she does make comments as we read. She's relatively brief about it. We don't get off on tangents too much."

Strategies used in postreading discussions by Professionals are on the same high level as those employed in prior segments of the reading aloud process. They include the use of questions such as "What would you have done?" "What would you have changed?" and "What could the father have done differently?"

The Artists

One definition for artists refers to them as people who do things that have form and beauty; they are aesthetically sensitive. When this definition is applied to parents who are Artists, it is intended to give prominence to their love of reading. Artists love all kinds of reading, including reading aloud to their children. Artists are the only group of parents who focus on sharing their love of reading with their children and cultivating this love within their children; it is their most identifiable characteristic.

When Artists read aloud to their children, they are mainly concentrating on the enjoyment that these events give to both their children and themselves; they are not preoccupied with manipulating these sessions to foster academic or intellectual growth. Artists see reading aloud as something that is done with children, not to them. To these parents, reading aloud and reading instruction are two separate concepts. Because Artists do not primarily use reading aloud as a tool to advance their children's academic or intellectual development, reading sessions are not individualized to meet the needs of a particular child and are thus free to include all of the children in the family. While intellectual and academic growth is not their first priority, Artists are not unaware of the potential that reading aloud has to stimulate such growth.

Because reading aloud is an activity that gives them so much pleasure, Artists continue their roles as primary readers to their first graders. Artists also want their children to feel the same way about reading as they do. Therefore, their children are joining them as readers in reading-aloud events.

In line with their love of all kinds of reading, Artists are free to select many different kinds of materials, from easy readers to chapter books. Their selection process is not encumbered by their goals for reading aloud. Artists do not employ many prereading or postreading strategies. However, they do use a variety of strategies as they read which foster a love of reading in their children.

This section first presents profiles of two Artists. It then describes the purposes Artists have for reading aloud to their first graders. Next, it examines the materials they use and how these materials are selected. Finally, the strategies used by Artists in reading aloud events are also discussed.

Parent profile: Mrs. Olson. Mrs. Olson is currently doing postgraduate work and is not employed outside of the home. She has four children, the oldest is a first grader in an average reading group. She is married to a college graduate and claims that "he is not as big a reader as I am.".

As a child, Mrs. Olson does not "remember as much being read to as my dad making up stories, and telling stories that he made up. I have vivid recollections of sitting with my dad and him telling me stories."

Mrs. Olson is a self-described "extremely avid reader and so are my kids and so is my grandfather, which is why it's a whole family thing. We started trying to turn them on pretty early to reading." She enjoys reading "mystery, science fiction, adventure," and reading for her coursework.

Mrs. Olson reads to her children anywhere from three to seven times a week. Mr. Olson is a frequent and active participant in these reading events, making them true family events. This first grader is joining her parents as a reader in these reading-aloud sessions.

Parent profile: Mrs. Dankert. Mrs. Dankert, a registered nurse, is one of the few mothers in this study who work full-time. She is married and has two sons, an eight-year-old and a seven-year-old in an average first grade reading group.

Mrs. Dankert describes her early reading experiences as "pleasant. I remember being very, very eager to read and remember being quite disappointed when they didn't teach me on the first day of first grade how to read because I was looking forward to that. I don't have a whole lot of memories of my mother or father reading to me, although they must have....But I remember in second grade even hiding under the covers to read my Nancy Drew mysteries at night after my mother had told me I was supposed to go to bed. I just wasn't willing to give that up. So I was a reader. I enjoyed it."

Mrs. Dankert said that she and her husband "do a tremendous amount of reading. I'm in graduate school and that requires an enormous amount of reading. I also am doing some research on my own (clinical ethics) which requires a lot of reading....I've recently gotten a couple of articles published and the background reading that goes into doing that is phenomenal....And my husband is kind of a World War II buff. That's a hobby of his. So we both do a lot of reading. We all read the Bible. So there's a lot of reading that goes on in the house."

With two parents working fulltime, the Dankerts have designed a read-aloud routine that fits their busy schedule, alternate reading. One parent reads and the other cleans up after dinner. More often than not, however, Mrs. Dankert is the reader. For the Dankerts, read-aloud sessions occur almost nightly, although less in summer because of soccer games and playing outside later. Sessions are about a half hour long and include both boys. As his read-aloud skills develop, this first grader is becoming a more active participant in these read-aloud events.

Purposes for reading aloud. Artists have been identified as having four purposes for reading aloud to their first graders. Their primary purpose is to share their love of reading with their children and to cultivate this love within their children. The other three purposes are developing intrafamilial relationships, bringing closure to the activities of the day, and stimulating academic and intellectual growth.

The first purpose, sharing their love of reading with their children and cultivating this love of reading within them, is unique to Artists. It is also the primary reason why Artists read aloud to their first-grade children. Artists love to read. Consequently, they love reading to their children; it is an activity that gives them much pleasure. When Artists described reading aloud, they are sensitive to their own feelings and to the feelings of their children as they read to them. Mrs. Olson stated that reading gives her "a good feeling." She also mentioned that she found pleasure in her child's "reactions to some of the stories." When Mrs. Dankert described reading aloud, she stated that "I enjoy it. They enjoy it." At the end of our interview, Mrs. Dankert summarized her feelings about reading aloud, describing it as "...a good feeling of a time of contentment."

Because Artists' feeling about reading are so positive, they want their children to emulate them. Artists believe that reading aloud is a vehicle that will lead children toward this goal. Mrs. Olson was so anxious to get started that "I signed her up for a children's book club when I found out I was pregnant." At another point, she stated that "we started trying to turn them on pretty early to reading."

A second purpose for Artists reading aloud is to develop intrafamilial relationships. Reading aloud events range from sessions with one parent and one child to sessions that include all family members. Mrs. Olson finds that "there's a certain amount of closeness that gets shared." Mrs. Dankert described reading-aloud as a "time of designated togetherness." She described a typical session as "almost always it's in our bed, my husband's and my bed. We all climb in there with the dog and here we all are under the covers reading." This Artist believes that "it's a time of togetherness for the kids and I."

Mr. Dankert and Mr. Olson are also active participants in reading aloud events with their first graders. While paternal participation in reading aloud events is not limited to families of Artists, this study found that it is not a common practice for fathers to regularily read aloud to their first graders. The Dankerts take turns reading to their children. Mrs. Dankert claims that she is "not always the person who reads. Sometimes my husband reads. We kind of take turns. So it gives them a special time with a parent." Mrs. Dankert emphasized that her husband's participation is on a regular basis, that ".... It's about 50-50. We take turns doing tasks. If I'm reading to the boys, he might be cleaning the supper dishes. On a night that I'm cleaning the supper dishes, he would read to the boys."

While the Dankerts alternate reading aloud, the Olsons read aloud concurrently. On videotape, while Mrs. Olson was reading at one end of the family room, Mr. Olson was reading aloud at the other end. These arrangements fit the individual reading needs of each family. The Dankerts have two children who are close in age (six and seven); having the parents alternate as readers is an appropriate method for them. On the other hand, the Olsons have four children, ranging from one to six; having both parents reading simultaneously meets their needs.

Another purpose for reading aloud is to bring closure to the day's activities. Mrs. Dankert describes these reading events as "a time of winding down." Mrs. Olson maintains that they "turn off the TV and read some stories. I don't encourage my kids to sit still and watch TV....Sometimes we'll do the reading with the TV on. Somebody else may be watching it but whoever is being read to is not paying attention to what's going on the TV." This parent claims that reading aloud "helps her wind down. That's part of the reason why our timing is such that, although it's not really a bedtime story, it's more of 'Ok, guys, it's getting close to bedtime. Let's stop the roughhousing. It's time to wind down. It's time to settle down, to relax a little bit, to read some stories."

The fourth reason that Artists read aloud to their first graders is to stimulate intellectual and academic growth. While this is not the primary purpose Artists have for reading aloud, it does not follow that Artists are oblivious to or ignore opportunities for learning. Mrs. Olsoh believes that "reading is very important. I think that if you can read, you can do or be anything you want to be."

Interestingly, while Artists may be aware of intellectual and academic benefits, Artists see them as byproducts of reading and not as reasons to read aloud to their children. They are not conscious of stimulating such growth as they read aloud. When asked what her goals for reading aloud to her first grader were, Mrs. Olson responded, "I really don't think I have any conscious goals about reading to her." Mrs. Dankert's answer was similar, "I can't say that I do, that I've thought of a specific goal."

Reading aloud materials and the selection process. The materials used by Artists as they read aloud to their first graders and also the process through which these materials are selected are largely determined by the reasons Artists have for reading aloud to their children.

Since their primary purpose is to share and cultivate a love of reading, materials that advance this goal are routinely selected. Artists love all kinds of reading materials. Consequently, they use a wide variety of genres when reading aloud to their children. When asked on the survey which genres are used for reading aloud, Mrs. Olson checked almost every one. Again, when she examined a pile of books during an interview, she again selected almost every genre. The Olson videotape also revealed the use of a wide variety of materials. The Dankerts' tastes in read-aloud materials is as comprehensive as that of the Olsons.

Books that are used by Artists as they read to their first graders range from noncomplex books, such as easy readers, to more challenging materials, such as chapter books. The former included P. D. Eastman's Are You My Mother? and Eric Carles's Animals, Amimals; the latter included The Boxcar Children by Ann Martin and Charlotte's Web by E. B. White. In between these two are a variety of other materials that are frequently used. They include Disney books, mass media books, and fairy tales.

Nonfiction materials are also part of the Artists' repertoires. Mrs. Olson stated that they "...just finished a science book on tornados and one called Wildlife at Risk, it's a series. It was the one on elephants because they just watched a special on TV about elephants. She wanted to know more about it." Mrs. Dankert also uses nonfiction books, and said that "they do like stories about insects. Trevor brought home one about spiders a couple of weeks ago."

As they read to their first graders, Artists currently use books that are more challenging than the materials they used when their children were kindergarteners or preschoolers. They select this more challenging material because they believe it reflects their children's current level of comprehension. Mrs. Olson is "looking for books that are a little harder" than the materials she used last year. Her criteria includes finding "books that are at her level, that she can read." Mrs. Olson recalled an incident in which she chose some library books about horses, "the library classifies them as picture books" but they were more difficult. Her child "wasn't really interested in it so we dropped them. That was preschool and kindergarten and I don't think she was ready. She might appreciate them better now."

Artists select books from many sources. Purchasing books is a common practice for Artists. Books may be bought at bookstores, religious shops, or department stores. Artists may also purchase special books to give as gifts to their children. Mrs. Olson stated that "....every Christmas we usually get each of the boys a set of some kind of books."

In addition to purchasing books, Artists also use borrowed materials. The public library is one source of such materials. Visits, however, are irregular. "It varies. About every other month. Sometimes as often as once a month." When asked about public library usage, Mrs. Olson responded that "it's just not a convenient place for us to go so we don't real often.......I'm guessing, maybe once a month."

The school is another source of materials. Occasionally books may be borrowed from a classroom teacher. However, the books that come home on a weekly basis from the school library are a more dependable source of materials. These first graders may select books that are above their independent reading level. These books are then read aloud by their Artist parents. Mrs. Olson recalls the time when her first grader "brought home Charlotte's Web and she spent this week trying to read some of that herself before she'll bring it over and say 'I'm frustrated. Will you read it?'"

Mrs. Olson stated that her first grader has "gotten more interested in sports, in baseball and things like that, and he will bring home books that are well beyond his reading level and wants me to read to him out of them."

Strategies used in reading aloud. Strategies employed by Artists in reading aloud events are largely determined by their purposes for reading. Since the goal of reading for enjoyment is emphasized more than any other, the strategies used by Artists as they read aloud reflect this reading-for-enjoyment perspective.

Prereading strategies are minimal. One reason is that rereading is a common practice for Artists. Consequently, many of the materials used are so familiar that the employment of some prereading strategies, such as predicting, would be unproductive. However, even with new materials, it is a common procedure for Artists to just begin reading without any preamble.

As the actual reading of the material takes place, Artists use various strategies to make their reading aloud events enjoyable. One of the most unique strategies, dramatic readings, was enthusiastically described by Mrs. Dankert. On occasion, she and her two children will sit in the big master bed and "kind of do some play acting with the stories....Sometimes the boys will each sit on one side (of me) and Trevor will be one character and I'll be one character, and Kyle will be one character. And I'll be narrator, and so I get (using a deep voice), 'He said!'"

Developing relationships between books and events or objects in the lives of their children is a strategy found as Artists read aloud to their children On a videotape, as Mrs. Olson read a book on sea otters to her first grader, she was attempting to describe their hair. She proceeded to relate it to the hair of the family dog. Mrs. Dankert laughingly recalled an incident during the reading of a Disney book. "We have a story of Donald Duck and he goes to visit the farm and he keeps saying that he's doing work but he's not doing any work. He's telling everybody else to do it. The boys commented once that that's how Daddy is sometimes!"

The strategy of questioning was also found in Artists' reading aloud events. Mrs. Dankert maintained that her first grader asks "a lot of questions. Still books that we read a hundred thousand times." When asked what kinds of questions, she replied, "Oh, anything that sparks a thought really....Well, just last night we were reading a story about Peter Pan and Brent wanted to know if it was possible not to grow up, and I said, 'No, that's not possible.' And then they wanted to know about pixie dust and how come Tinkerbell didn't like Wendy. And, 'Well, she was jealous.' And all that. And pretty soon I have to say, 'Let's read the story!'"

This exchange also reveals another attribute of Artists' reading events. As Artists read to their children, they encourage their children to actively participate, to contribute verbally to the reading event. Another example of this verbalization was given by Mrs. Olson, "She tends to like things that are a little bit funny and silly and she'll think of something that she thinks is really silly and she'll share it."

Artists also use strategies that require their children to use their imaginations. Mrs. Olson stated that "sometimes we'll talk about picturing things, picturing in your mind what's going on, make the picture in your head as to what you're saying. Sometimes she'll give me feedback as to what she's seeing, saying."

Because Artists want reading sessions to focus on enjoyment, they do not attempt to give any reading instruction as they read aloud. When specifically asked if they ever gave reading instruction, both Mrs. Dankert and Mrs. Olson maintain that they do not give any instruction. The only incident that Mrs. Olson could recall that even hinted at instruction was "sometimes when we are reading, she'll be watching over my shoulder and she'll find where we are and she'll say 'This is where we are.' So she's following herself." However, it was noted on the videotape that, when her first grader was the reader, this Artist did give some reading instruction.

The use of postreading strategies by Artists was not observed.

The Journeymen

The word "journeymen" is defined as workers who have learned a trade and are qualified to work at it but not at masters' levels. Being qualified, however, indicates only that the minimal skills necessary to do the job exist; it does not necessarily mean that a high degree of proficiency exists. When applied to parents and reading aloud, Journeymen defined those parents who have learned their trade, reading aloud to their children, and are qualified to work at it. By definition, this does not mean that they are highly qualified; it simply means that they possess the skills necessary to adequately do the job.

Parents who are Journeymen do not have strong feelings about reading aloud. They are not highly motivated to reach specific goals when they read to their children. Although they perceive reading aloud to somehow be beneficial to their children's literacy development, they do not feel strongly pressured to read aloud. Furthermore, although Journeymen like to read to their children, they are not preoccupied with developing a love of reading in their children.

Journeymen see reading aloud as a "good" way to help their children, as a "nice" end to the day, as a "fun" activity for their children and themselves. Their children are joining them as primary readers.

This section commences with profiles of three Journeymen. It continues by examining the purposes that

Journeymen have for reading aloud to their children. Finally, it concludes by discussing the materials and the strategies that Journeymen employ during reading aloud events.

Parent profile: Mrs. Daniels. Mrs. Daniels attended college for three years and is employed part-time as a waitress. Her husband attended for one year and is a construction supervisor. They have two children, a ten-year-old son and a seven-year-old daughter in first grade. This daughter received an extra year of school between kindergarten and first grade. During first grade she was in an average reading group.

As a child, Mrs. Daniels "can't remember reading stories so much as nursery rhymes." She thinks she was read to as a child; she "can remember the pictures and all that."

Mrs. Daniels currently reads "mostly paperbacks, mostly fiction. Once in a great while, I read the book about Mary Lincoln. Once in a while I'll read something like that. That's about it. I don't read magazines."

Participation in reading aloud events is usually limited to Mrs. Daniels and her first grader, rarely including Mr. Daniels or their older child. Sessions occur about three times a week and are about ten to fifteen minutes in duration. While reading aloud commonly occurs at bedtime, it is not unusual for this dyad to read together during the daytime. In the last half of first grade, Mrs. Daniel's daughter began to more frequently participate in these events as the reader.

Parent profile: Mrs. Tsang. Mrs. Tsang and her husband were born and raised in the Phillipines. While they speak both English and Filipino at home, their children speak only English. Mrs. Tsang, a college graduate, is employed part-time as a school lunchroom supervisor; her husband is a medical doctor. In addition to a daughter aged thirteen and a son aged twelve, the Tsangs have a seven-year-old son in first grade who is in a low reading group.

Mrs. Tsang does not believe that she was read to as a child. She did recall that "when I was in fifth grade, I did read some books and then I got involved in extracurricular activities."

Parent profile: Mrs. Verdi. Mrs. Verdi has a degree in education and works full-time as an instructional assistant in a public elementary school. She is married and has a son aged nine and a daughter aged six who is in an average first-grade reading group. Her husband is in sales and completed fourteen years of schooling.

Recalling her early reading experiences, Mrs. Verdi stated that there was "nothing real dynamic that I remember." She does recall being read to, "Mom, 90% of the time. Dad, once in a while. And Grandma, I always remember that, I remember going to Grandma's and she would read."

Mrs. Verdi currently reads the "newspaper, educational books, a lot of those, magazines. Occasionally some fiction gets read, not much time."

Reading aloud occurs regularly between Mrs. Verdi and her first grader, "our routine is supposed to be every night. And if I were to guess, I'd say 80%." Sessions are usually a half hour long and are at bedtime. Mrs. Verdi also reads to her son in separate sessions. Her husband only very infrequently reads to this first grader.

Purposes for reading aloud. Journeymen have several reasons for reading aloud to their children. One is their belief that reading aloud is a good thing to do for their children. Second, reading aloud is an enjoyable activity for their children and themselves. Third, it is a way to prepare for bedtime.

The first purpose, reading is good for their children, is a common purpose for Journeymen. They have been told by the schools and the media that reading aloud is a positive experience and they believe this to be true. Mrs. Tsang stated that "...the school really emphasizes reading is good for kids than watching TV or doing something else." Mrs. Daniels explained that "it's good to have it done to her." Later, this parent added, "Now that she's starting to read more, I think it's good just for her to follow along. It's fun to know what your mom's doing there."

Still another Journeyman, Mrs. Verdi, explained some of the benefits of reading aloud as "hearing, language, hearing reading, learning the importance of books, picking up sight words." This Journeyman, a teacher, learned about these benefits "even before I taught, just by reading magazines and what you hear. You read that the more you read, the better it is for them." At another point, this parent reinforced her belief that reading aloud helps her child become a better reader when she stated, "She's been struggliing a little this year so I know I've been wanting to help her even more with reading. So that would be a goal."

Journeymen also read to their children because they and their children enjoy the activity. Mrs. Daniels explained that her child enjoyed being read to "when she's bored or we've got nothing to do." At another point, she added, "It's the time together.... So we always sit real close to each other. That's our 'cuddle close,' we call that." However, when asked what she felt as she read aloud to her child, this same parent responded "Oh, man! That's a tough one! There are some nights I could sit there forever, and there are some nights when I think that I have so much to do....I really don't think it's an imposition, ever. It's just that sometimes my mind isn't always right there."

Another Journeyman, Mrs. Verdi, commenting on how her child felt about being read to, stated, "The time, her and me being alone. Time to spend together. Learning the different things from books. That makes her happy. She wants to do it every night, even on the nights that it's too late." This parent also explained that "things being so hectic, trying to work. It's kind of our special time. That point we get to be together, with a book." Later she added, "reading aloud makes me happy and I love to read. I love to share the time with her. I find reading enjoyable." This mother concluded, "You know, if I don't a night, I feel guilty." Still another Journeyman, Mrs. Tsang, stated that her son "doesn't sleep until I read," "He likes it when I read to him," she said. When asked how she knew that her son enjoyed it, this Journeyman responded, "Oh, you can tell! You're a mother!"

A third reason for reading aloud is preparation for bedtime, a way to end the day. One Journeyman, Mrs. Daniels, stated that "it settles her down at bedtime, otherwise she's still racing." Mrs. Verdi agreed, stating that "it helps them fall asleep sometimes."

Reading aloud materials and the selection process. Materials used by Journeymen in reading events with their children are not highly challenging materials. "He likes Golden Books," Mrs. Tsang explained. "We have a lot of those." Mass media books, such as books from the Berenstain Bears collection or Duck Tales, are also popular with Journeymen. Easy readers such as H. A. Rey's *Curious George* and repetitive materials such as *Quick As A Cricket* by A. Wood were also used.

The genre most often identified as part of stock of Journeymen was easy readers. Mrs. Tsang described some of the books that she uses as books in which her son "can read almost all the words that's in the book." The easy reader, *Are You My Mother?* (by P. D. Eastman), is a typical selection of Journeymen. One Journeyman, Mrs. Verdi, noted, "It seems like almost automatically she pulls one like *Are You My*

Mother?, an easy, and then we'll have another one."

This dependence on books that can be decoded by these first grade children of Journeymen preclude the continued use of more challenging materials that were read by Journeymen before their children began to decode. Mrs. Tsang commented, "The books we used to read in preschool, he can't read at all....When he was in preschool, we didn't really borrow those easy-to-read books. We borrowed those books that he liked to look at."

A variety of other books were identified by Journeymen as books they have recently read to their children. These books could not be easily classified. They ranged from the simple, such as Bing the Duck to the more complex, such as J. Grimm's The Six Swans. Highly challenging materials, such as chapter books, are not staple items for Journeymen.

Books are secured from a variety of sources. They are received as gifts, occasionally purchased, or borrowed from the public library. Books that are brought home from the school library are another source.

Strategies used when reading aloud. Several strategies are used by Journeymen; none involve the use of higher level thinking skills. The use of prereading strategies was not noted as a component of Journeymen's reading aloud events.

Several during-reading strategies were observed. Rereading is one commonly used technique of Journeymen. Mrs. Tsang stated, "He likes certain books that he puts on a certain place that he wants to read like every couple of nights and we read those books." Later, while discussing her child's favorite books, that same parent stated, "Sometimes he'll find something that he really likes but it's from the library. So have to return it and we just renew it." One Journeyman, Mrs. Verdi, summed it up when she stated "Repetition is wonderful. The more we read them, the more words she picks up and wants to read them."

Relating books to experiences in their children's lives is another commonly used strategy of Journeymen. Mrs. Tsang explained, "And The Tooth Fairy book. It's like what other kids do when they lose their tooth, he kind of relates." Later, this parent added, "We read stories, sad stories, and remind him of when we visited my parents and he started crying. He is not really crying but you can see the tears in the eyes." When asked if she could recall an incident in which a book related to a sitiation within her child's experiences, Mrs. Daniels stated, "The Berenstain Bears is a good example. Messy Room, Too Much TV."

Questions are also a part of the during reading strategies of Journeymen. The questions, however, originate with the children, not their Journeyman parents and do not require the children to use higher cognitive skills. One parent, Mrs. Tsang, encouraged her child to ask questions, telling him, "Like in school, you know, if the teacher is reading, you cannot interrupt. I'm your mom. When I'm reading to you, you can always stop me and ask questions." Later this parent aded "He'll ask questions.... He'll ask questions pertaining to that paragraph that we're reading." Another parent, Mrs. Daniels, recalled, "We stop and look at the pictures. She'll ask me sometimes what a word means or what that meant."

The children of Journeymen are beginning to join their parents in the reading aloud events. Mrs. Tsang said, "Sometimes in the book there are longer words that he doesn't know how to read. We'll stop at that page and kind of exercise him. Let's try you read this paragraph and let's see if you can do some of this hard." Another Journeyman, Mrs. Verdi, related a similar description of her child joining in the reading, "It's increasing lately. I'd say it's almost nightly. She'll start the book and then I'll finish it. Or sometimes I'll read a page, she'll read a page. Or sometimes she'll read a whole book."

Postreading strategies were not found to be a part of the regular reading routines of Journeymen.

The Laborers

Laborers are, by definition, persons whose work is characterized largely by physical exertion. Parents who are classified as Laborers are those parents for whom reading aloud to their first-grade children is toilsome. Laborers are not especially fond of reading aloud, but, because they want to "do the right things" for their children, they feel pressured into reading aloud to them. They do it but it is a chore. They may wish they were doing something else, but they read aloud anyway.

Laborers equate reading aloud with decoding skills. Laborers have been convinced by outside authorities, such as the schools, that reading aloud will somehow make their children better readers. This is the foundation on which Laborers build reading aloud events; this is their primary purpose for reading aloud. However, because Laborers are not knowledgeable about the philosophical and theoretical principles that encourage reading aloud as a successful tool in the development of children's literacy, their purposes, materials, and strategies are not strongly influenced by these principles.

The materials and strategies selected by Laborers for reading aloud reflect their purposes for reading aloud. Books have simple plots and vocabularies, and they are often short, quickly read storybooks. Strategies make few high cognitive demands on the children of Laborers. Instead, they often focus on developing decoding skills.

Laborers will continue to read aloud to their children as long as they perceive reading aloud to be beneficial to their children. Since the development of decoding skills is highly valued by Laborers and equated with reading aloud, Laborers encourage their children to replace them as primary readers as soon as the children begin to exhibit decoding abilities. However, if this demands a greater committment of their time, Laborers will remain as primary readers.

This section first presents two profiles of parents who are Laborers. Next, it focuses on the purposes Laborers have for reading aloud, and it then discusses the materials and strategies Laborers use to achieve their purposes.

Parent profile: Mrs. Scalla. Mrs. Scalla has five daughters, ages 14, 6, 6, 4, and 2. The six-year-old twins are first graders and both are in low reading groups. This parent is a part-time store clerk and part-time junior college student. Both she and her self-employed husband have completed fourteen years of school.

Mrs. Scalla remembers being read to as a child by her mother who "even today, when the grandkids go over, she's got a whole library of children's books....She's always the first one to know when a new book comes out. She wants to write children's books. She's written a couple but nothing's been published....Yes, we absolutely were read to as children, quite a bit."

When discussing her current reading, Mrs. Scalla explained that she used to read more "but I'm sworn off because I neglect my house and children. I remember one time I started a two-book series and nobody ate or got dressed for two days! So now I limit myself to magazine articles that I can read in an hour. And I've become addicted to my oldest daughter's junior high books, her babysitting books because I can read them in an hour."

Reading aloud is part of the bedtime routine for this mother. She reads to the four younger girs together;

sessions are usually about fifteen minutes long, but range from five minutes to over an hour. Mrs. Scalla is the only reader; her children do not join her as readers. This parent occasionally reads aloud during the day to her children.

Parent profile: Mrs. Strauss. Mrs. Strauss, a college graduate, recently returned to work part-time as a sales associate. Her husband, also a college graduate, runs a family business. The Strauss' have an eight-year-old son and a six-year-old daughter who is in a low reading group in first grade.

When asked about her childhood reading memories, Mrs. Strauss said that she "didn't read as much as my children do. It was never reinforced. It wasn't pushed as it is now, you know, as far as reinforcement....my mother couldn't read any English." In response to the question, "Were you read to as a child?" she replied, "I don't know....not that much. Mostly in German, Grimm Brothers. I remember that my dad and I still have a few of my German books that my father read to me and my mother."

Currently, Mrs. Strauss describes herself as "not the greatest, not the biggest reader. But I do like magazines. I read a lot of articles in magazines and I do read the newspaper. I've been getting The Herald but I really like the Sunday Tribune. That's about all the time I have. I'm just real busy." Her husband is dyslexic and "doesn't read at all. He'll just read business stuff."

Reading aloud is a common bedtime activity for Mrs.

Strauss and her daughter. Her daughter is replacing her as the reader. Sessions, which last from 15 to 20 minutes, rarely include anyone else.

Purposes for reading aloud. Laborers have several reasons for reading aloud to their children. First is the belief that reading aloud will help their children become better readers. Second, Laborers read aloud because they feel pressured into doing it; it is something that parents should do. Finally, Laborers read aloud because their children want them to.

One reason Laborers engage in this activity is to help their children become better readers. Mrs. Scalla explained that "it's good for developing their own reading skills." Mrs. Strauss shares this goal, adding that "my goal is for her to be the best reader. You know, just to be really good, and I'd be so happy. If she's in average reading classes, that's great. But if she was in better, that's even greater. Whatever she can do." (This is such a strong motivator for this parent that, during the collection and analyses of data from this parent, it was found that this Laborer applied the term "reading to her child" to all reading aloud events in which she participated with her child, regardless of whether or not she did any of the reading. For example, after completing the survey on reading aloud, keeping a journal, and being interviewed about reading aloud, this Laborer graciously agreed to videotape a reading aloud session. In spite of all of these contacts with reading aloud, the readers on the videotape were limited to the first grader and her eight-year-old sibling. No examples of this parent as reader were included.)

Secondly, Laborers continue this activity because they feel pressured to continue reading aloud to their first graders. She does it, Mrs. Strauss explained, "because it's almost like you have to, I think." Mrs. Scalla echos this sentiment, confessing that she reads to them because "I know I should."

Mrs. Scalla did not begin to read to her young children because she enjoyed reading aloud. She began reading to her children because she was advised to by the school. This pressure is her prime motivator. When her first grader was three, she began seeing the speech pathologist at the local public school. Mrs. Scalla recalls "when I first started making reading a routine at night, I wasn't doing it so much that they would develop their own reading habits as much as their speech. I was told by the speech teacher that just hearing the verbal, the sentences, and the way things flow, and even poetry and things like that, would help them with good speech habits." When specifically asked if she had any goals as she read, this Laborer responded, "Getting done before the next TV show starts, is that considered a goal?"

When asked what they felt when they read to their children, Laborers poignantly expressed their feelings about reading aloud. Mrs. Strauss blurted out, "In all honesty?

Sometimes, and this is terrible to say, sometimes I can't wait to just get it over with because I'm just so tired.... And I know that's terrible but that's the truth. Well, I feel so guilty." Mrs. Scalla expressed similar feelings, saying, "To tell you the truth, I don't enjoy reading to them. It's terrible but I don't. It's a chore to me." At another point, in response to a question on her feelings as she read aloud, this Laborer laughed and said, "Impatience comes to mind. Like I said, I'm not a person who does this because I like to do it....I don't know why I can't make myself feel that reading is as important as doing the dishes or making dinner, But I've never been able to quite get past that hurdle so it always feels like a chore, that I should be doing something else. Usually, 90 percent of the time, that's how I feel about it."

Another reason Laborers read aloud to their first graders is because their children enjoy being read to and ask their parents to read to them. One Laborer, Mrs. Strauss, said that "....she will not go to bed without a book...." Later this same parent commented that "She likes it. She loves having me. I think she likes just having me next to her and she really enjoys it."

When asked why she read aloud, another Laborer, Mrs. Scalla, stated that "the main reason is because they really enjoy being read to." Ironically, in spite of the fact that the Laborers do not enjoy these reading aloud events, their children do.

Materials and their selection process. The materials Laborers use when reading aloud and the criteria used to select them are influenced by the purposes Laborers have for reading aloud. Consequently, since a principal purpose for reading aloud is to help their first graders become better decoders, materials that advance this purpose are often selected. Laborers also read to their first graders because these children enjoy being read to. Finally, Laborers read aloud because they feel pressured by the schools, the media, and others to do so. Both of these reasons also affect the types of materials that Laborers select.

Laborers believe that reading aloud will help their children become better readers. For Laborers, reading is equated with decoding skills. One Laborer, Mrs. Strauss, stated that she looks for books that are on her first grader's current level of decoding, "I do look at the pictures and if there's too much written on the page. I kind of go by what her level is. Like the better she's getting, the more difficult I'm looking at books. The more difficulty but the words are still easier."

As a result, books such as easy readers, that enable parents and their first graders to focus on decoding, are commonly used materials. *A Wocket In My Pocket* by Dr. Seuss and *Goodnight, Moon* by M. L. Brown are typical choices of Laborers. These books concentrate on developing decoding skills and have a simple plot and vocabulary. As she examined a Nikki book, a book often used with preschoolers, Mrs. Strauss commented, "She'd probably like that cause of the kitty cat."

Mrs. Strauss does not believe that the books that she uses are much more difficult than those used last year when her daughter was a kindergartener ("Just a little bit.") or even prior to that when her child was a preschooler ("A bit but not much.")

A second purpose for reading aloud is also satisfied by the use of books such as easy readers. Laborers read to their children because their children enjoy being read to. Comprehension of these materials is not highly challenging for the children of Laborers. Consequently, using these materials enables these first graders to be successful comprehenders. This in turn increases the enjoyment of the reading aloud event for these children.

Chapter books, which usually contain more complex plots and more advanced vocabularies, are not included in the repertoire of Laborers. One chapter book, Winnie the Pooh, by A. A. Milne, was described by Mrs. Strauss as too advanced, "I'd lose her on that." Another Laborer, Mrs. Scalla, concurred, explaining that "I just love it. But the language in it is difficult for my children to understand."

Although books that make low cognitive demands are staples in the current reading libraries of Laborers, the materials they use are not limited exclusively to books such as easy readers. Other reading materials mentioned by Laborers include a children's poetry book by J. Prelutsky, *New Kid On The Block*, and several storybooks with simple plot structures, such as J. Marshall's versions of both *The Three Little Pigs* and *Little Red Riding Hood*.

Since Mrs. Scalla finds reading aloud to be a chore, she reads to her four children together (ages range from two-years old to six years old). As a result, the materials she selects must have some appeal to all of her children, regardless of their individual needs or interests. Mrs. Scalla stated that "we've become a little more sophisticated. Although probably not as sophisticated as we would be if we weren't reading with younger children in the house. Jessica and Jennifer are probably, and I thought about this, too, many times, are probably ready for books that would take two or three nights to read but my other children are not ready. They don't have that kind of attention span. They would not know what was going on. I don't think that they would remember. So we have really held back from doing that. I know my husband's been saying 'Why don't you start them on *Chronicles of Narnia*?' because that's his favorite book series ever....He thinks I should start them on it. I think they're a little young but he thinks, 'No, no, they would love it!' But I know my younger children aren't ready so it's just kind of, it's hard. You know when you're working with a group of children, unfortunately, you lower the standards of the higher ones to meet the needs of the younger ones. I'm sure you do that in school all the time. You're trying to aim for the average group."

When Laborers read aloud, the selection of materials is influenced by the fact that this not a favorite activity. Laborers feel pressured into reading to their children. Consequently, the length of the book is one criterion. When asked what factors she considers when selecting books, Mrs. Scalla confessed, "Length. Isn't that terrible? Length is one thing." At another point, she again alluded to this, stating, "And other nights we'll read a regular length book. And some nights they pick out these books that are so long, I could shoot them and it takes me an hour to read it...."

On the same topic, Mrs. Scalla wrote in her journal, "Pinnochio was so long that we had to 'ad-lib' according to the pictures. We haven't graduated to books that take more than ten minutes at one sitting."

Laborers are also aware of and influenced by the illustrations. Remarks included "beautiful pictures, which is the nice thing," "she wants to look at the pictures," "she likes picture books," and "....it's a pleasant book with nice pictures, really cute."

Materials used by Laborers are obtained from a variety of sources, including the school library, school book clubs, book fairs, and book stores. Books are also received as gifts. Extensive home libraries were also described by Laborers.

Determining which books will be read on a given night is rarely a thought provoking event for Laborers. The selection is usually made by a child. Mrs. Scalla explained the procedure used by her family, "Each night it's different. We usually go in a circle.....But Mom gets hers in there, too. Sometimes because I either have a book that I want to read or the one they've picked is too long and I say, 'We'll have to save this for tomorrow night and read something else tonight.'"

Strategies used in reading aloud. Strategies used by Laborers during reading aloud events with their first graders support their purposes for reading aloud. Since Laborers believe that reading aloud will somehow help their first graders become better readers, their behaviors prior to, during, and after reading aloud reflect this. Because they find reading aloud to be a chore, what they do in these reading events is also influenced by their feelings. Laborers also read to their children because their children like it. One reason why their children like it may be that the strategies used do not demand much higher-level thinking on their part.

The use of prereading strategies is not a routine practice for Laborers. Videotape analysis revealed that Laborers usually open the book and start reading. Discussions about the book and other strategies, such as predicting, were not observed. One Laborer, Mrs. Scalla, explained that "I say 'Everybody into bed. I'm starting the book and you're going to miss it.'"

Rereading is another strategy of Laborers. The selection of materials for reading aloud is usually made by the first graders who frequently choose books with which they are familiar. When asked why she reread books, Mrs. Scalla stated, "First of all, they're convenient. We have them in our library. But it does seem that, even though, with the hundreds of books we have, that we still seem to read the same books over and over. I'm not sure if it's because they're familiar or if it's just because the kids like them and pick them more often. They're more likely to pick a book that they've read before than they're not. I don't know why that is. When faced with two or three books, they'll pick the one they've read before. I think they do like familiarity. And I don't know, I'm really not sure, why we do that. Many times, we'll go through the books and I think, 'Gee, we haven't even read these books. I haven't read these since Susy was a little girl.' And we will pick the same ones over and over to read."'

During-reading strategies include reading instruction and questioning. Reading instruction is primarily decoding instruction and is limited to those occasions in which the first grader is the reader. Interestingly, although Laborers equate good reading with good decoding, no examples were found in which the parents provided decoding instruction when they were the readers. Questions are frequently low-level questions, such as "Do you understand this?" The regular use of high-level questioning was not found among Laborers.

As Laborers engage in reading activities with their children, strategies that shorten the reading event were observed. One Laborer, Mrs. Strauss, described a scene in which she was listening to her first grader read while putting clothes away. She explained, "I know this sounds terrible. Like last night I was putting away her clothes and then she'd get stuck on a word and she'd spell it. That was bad. That's a bad example! I don't do that all the time!"

Another Laborer, Mrs. Scalla, commented, "You have to read the words now. Before we could look at the pictures and say 'The little boy is combing his hair. Look! He has such nice hair after it's combed.' And turn the page and skip about three paragraphs. Now we have to actually read the words and they know if I've skipped any sentences because so many of our books have become so familiar. They're like, 'You missed that sentence about this.' So you can't get away with a thing anymore."

As Laborers read aloud to their children, their children do not actively participate to a high degree in the reading act. Mrs. Strauss commented that, as she reads to her first grader, her child sits quietly. Sometime, she continued, "....She'll point out something to me in the pictures and she'll say 'Oh, there's the baby rabbit.'"

Laborers have been told that reading aloud will help their children become better readers. However, no data was found that supports the idea that Laborers are highly aware of how reading aloud contributes to the development of reading skills in their first graders. Evidence to the contrary abounded. Mrs. Scalla explained what happens as she reads, "They're in their beds and I turn the book around and show them the pictures....I just do one of these routines (pans with an imaginary book) with the book." She sees a drawback to this method, explaining "that it isn't the best thing for Jessica and Jennifer because it would be really good for them to see the words written as I'm reading. But we've never come up with a way. Even if I sit on the couch downstairs, they don't all get close enough to me to see the pictures and they're fighting over who is sitting where and climbing all over me and it just isn't - I haven't really come up with a way."

Postreading strategies are not regularly engaged in by Laborers. When asked what occurs when "you come to the last page," Mrs. Scalla commented that "we have more routine than this. Reading is only the first part of the routine. We're singers." Another Laborer, Mrs. Strauss, was asked, "So then you finish the story. Is there anything that happens after that?" She replied, "Well, when she's not real tired, she'll say her prayers in German." Post-reading behaviors are not perceived as activities that are related to what has just been read.

When asked what might be observed "as you are getting ready to read," Mrs. Strauss' response summarized her perceptions of reading aloud strategies. She explained that her first grader would "pick out her book and then I'd have her blanket pulled back and we're all ready to go, either to sit next to me or she'll lie down and then I'll sit there...

and read her her book and then that's it. She goes to bed."

The Craftsmen

In general, craftsmen are defined as persons who are skilled in the mechanics of an art. Parents who are catagorized as Craftsmen are parents who only infrequently read aloud to their children because they have taught their children the mechanics of reading, that is, how to decode. Being able to decode, they reason, demonstrates their children's ability to read independently, and independent reading, they further reason, is the most desirous form of reading. This is their goal, to teach their children how to decode and become independent readers.

Therefore, as their children begin to exhibit decoding abilities, Craftsmen find that they have no other motivation for continuing as primary readers, and they begin to withdraw as primary readers in their children's reading events. Craftsmen also believe that these withdrawals allow their first graders more opportunities to develop decoding abilities. Thus, their children are encouraged to replace their parents as primary readers. As a result, these parents then become secondary readers, only occasionally participating as primary readers in their first graders' reading aloud sessions.

The materials that Craftsmen used in their earlier capacities as primary readers and the materials that their children currently use reflect Craftsmen interpretations about the value of reading aloud. When their children were unable to decode or were just beginning to exhibit some decoding abilities, Craftsmen selected materials which would develop decoding skills. Later, as their children became more successful decoders, the content of the materials became a more significant component of the selection process.

The strategies Craftsmen now use as they occasionally read to their first graders reflect their beliefs that the foremost purposes behind parents reading aloud to their children are to advance children's progress toward independent readership. Therefore, strategies that focus on providing temporary assistance prevail.

This section will first present profiles of two parents who have been identified as Craftsmen. It will then examine the goals for reading aloud, the materials, and the strategies used aby Craftsmen.

Parent profile: Mrs. O'Neill. Mrs. O'Neill, a mother of four, is not employed outside of the home. Both she and her husband, a computer programer, have completed 15 years of schooling. They have four children, sons aged ten and one, and daughters aged seven and six. The seven-year-old is in an accelerated first-grade reading group.

Mrs. O'Neill does not recall being read to as a child. "Gosh, I don't remember. I had a sister who was six years older that me so maybe she did. I really don't remember!.... I don't think my mother did because they're both from Italy and my mother could barely read."

To an inquiry into her current reading, Mrs. O'Neill responded, "Barely. With four kids, if I read the front page of the newspaper. If I get up a little early, I can read a little more but....Mostly the newspaper, that's about what I get through. I hate reading magazines, there's too many commercials, ads. So I don't even bother with magazines. I was trying to read some books. We'd go to the library and I'd get a few but it would end up I never got through them. So I said, 'It just wasn't worth it.'"

Mrs. O'Neill read to her first grader when she was a preschooler and unable to decode. When her daughter began to exhibit decoding abilities, Mrs. O'Neill withdrew from her position as primary reader. She currently only reads to her first grader to provide temporary assistance.

Parent profile: Mrs. Clark. Mrs. Clark, a college graduate, does not work outside of the home. Her husband, a sales manager, is currently working towards his MBA. The Clarks have two sons, a one-year-old and a seven-year-old who is in an accelerated reading program in first grade.

As a child, Mrs. Clark does not remember being read to, "I'm sure my mother read to me, but I just don't remember." However, she does recall "my mother having to force me to read and that's why I try to read at an early stage with my kids because I want them to appreciate, I mean, now that I'm older, I resent the fact that I didn't read more when I was younger. But, to me, when I was younger, reading was something that, if I didn't have anything else to do, then I'd read. I'd rather go play with my friends." She explained that her attitude changed "....when I went to college, I just saw how important it was and I just felt that, my children, maybe if I could introduce it early enough, they'd apreciate it."

Referring to her current reading activities, Mrs. Clark stated that "I never have the time myself, so it's usually the newspaper, daily. I get several magazines, like Parent and that kind of stuff. Very seldom do I get a chance to read a novel. I would love to, but I just don't have the time."

Mrs. Clark read to her son when he was a preschooler. When he began to decode in kindergarten, her son replaced her as primary reader. As his interests in more difficult material grows, Mrs. Clark is reading this material to him.

Purposes for reading aloud. Craftsmen use reading aloud to help their first graders become independent readers. This is their main reason for reading aloud to their first graders. They see reading aloud as utilitarian, as a practical means to achieve their goal. When their children are learning to decode, reading aloud and learning to read are inseparable. When asked if reading aloud to first graders makes a difference, one Craftman, Mrs. O'Neill, replied, "Well, I think it's good, definitely. I think [that's how] kids learn. I know that's how Rosemary learned. Because she would see the word or I'd be running my finger along the page as I read each word and she learned to like sight recognize the word."

As these children advance toward this goal of independent reading, Craftsmen believe that they should begin to withdraw from their positions as primary readers and encourage their children to assume those positions.

When her child was four years old, Mrs. O'Neill and her child began the process which reversed their positions as secondary and primary readers. This parent recalled, "She learned some of the words and then she'd only want to read the words that she knew. And then she'd let me read. And she'd stop, and I'd know that she didn't know that word so I'd read that word. And then she'd go on reading the words that she knew. And it got to the point then, 'No, I don't want you to read to me!'"

Currently, these first graders enjoy being the primary readers. Mrs. O'Neill remarked that her child does not want to be read to at all by her parent. She stated, "Remember that aspirin commercial about 'I can do it?' I think of that all the time because she says that all the time. 'Mother, I can do it myself!''

These first graders enjoy reading to their parents. One Craftsman, Mrs. Clark, said, "he'll read to us occasionally....I guess they studied the planets in first grade, like Jupiter. So he got some books at the library on that and sometimes he'll sit down and read those. Kind of like, 'Mom, did you know that....'"

As the novelty of decoding is beginning to wear off, there are signs that the children of Craftsman may be receptive to the idea of again being read to by their parents. When very curious about a specific topic, there may be more interest in comprehending the material than in decoding it. While disussing a book that she perceived would be of interest to her first grader but too difficult for the child to decode, Mrs. Clark was asked, "Would he ask you to read that to him?" She replied, I normally would say 'No,' but after he picked out three science books, I was kind of surprised. So he probably would now."

While Craftsmen may have other purposes for reading aloud, they were not identified in this study. Reminiscent of Journeymen, Craftsmen did not refer to reading aloud as means of developing closer relationships with their children, as a desirable activity before bedtime, or as an activity that they as parents find enjoyable.

When discussing reading aloud activities, Craftsmen are primarily guided by their belief that reading aloud is a means to an end, a way to help their children become successful, independent readers.

Reading aloud materials and the selection process. Materials that are used by Craftsmen and their first graders are materials in which the first graders are the primary readers. Often these first graders are not only the primary readers but are also the solitary readers. As a result, materials must reflect the current decoding and comprehension levels of these young readers. Materials that are beyond the levels at which these first graders can read independently are not commonly selected. Interestingly, as these first graders expand their reading horizons, they are beginning to encounter reading materials that are interesting but beyond their level. One solution is the return of the Craftsmen as primary readers.

As Mrs. Clark examined a pile of books that might be used with first graders, she commented that some books that her first graders would enjoy are too difficult for him to read independently. As she examined The Last Dinosaur, a book too difficult for most first graders to use independently, she remarked, "He would have problems with that. I'd have to read it to him."

Chapter books are another genre that are often beyond the independent reading level of many first graders. Pointing to Winnie the Pooh by A. A. Milne, one Craftsman, Mrs. Clark, stated that "they started him in chapter books in school. Now that would be too hard. We had something similar, I don't remember what it was, one of the Pooh books. And he took it to school, and he had a hard time with it."

While Craftsmen continue to subscribe to children's magazines, such as Jack and Jill, Contact, Highlights, and The U.S. Kids, they do not read them to their children. Furthermore, it is only infrequently that their children use these magazines.

When these first graders began to read independently, they also began to independently select many of the materials that they would use. As a result, these young readers currently enjoy books that are easy to decode, such as Deputy Dan Gets His Man by J. Rosenbloom, or books that can be comprehended without adult assistance, such as The Berenstain Bears Go Out For The Team.

While libray use during the school year by Craftsmen was limited, they do participate in the summer reading program at the public library. In this program, Mrs. O'Neill explained, "you read so many books and then there's a grand prize drawing. And you get a little prize at the end." Since Craftsmen see reading as a tool, as a means to a goal, their participation in such a program is understandable. The value of reading is not intrinsic but is found beyond, in "a little prize at the end."

The use of nonfiction materials, such as Grolier Tales, which are autobiographies of famous people, and science books on topics such as "space," are encouraged by Craftsmen. Mrs. O'Neill stated, "We bought the Compton's Encyclopaedias and she'll sit down and look up things in there and just read through one of them."

Ironically, as these first graders become increasingly more independent as readers, the range of the materials that are available to them decreases. Books that were appropriate when their Craftsmen parents were primary readers are frequently no longer appropriate. Consequently, until these young readers develop their skills enough so that they can read the many materials that are currently of interest to them but are beyond their independent reading levels, they will need adult readers participating in their reading events. If this adult participation is not forthcoming, less challenging materials will be needed.

Strategies used in reading aloud. Since Craftsmen are not primary readers in their first graders reading events, their use of strategies is limited. Strategies are commonly used by Craftsmen to relieve the frustrations being experienced by these young readers as they attempt to read independently.

Prereading strategies are not common practices for Craftsmen. Because their children usually begin reading independently and come to their parents when they are struggling, Craftsmen do not have opportunities to practice many prereading strategies.

During-reading strategies are not as infrequent. One such strategy is the technique of paired reading, in which the parent and the child alternate as readers. Describing an incident in which her first grader was having a difficult time reading, a Craftman, Mrs. O'Neill, explained that her child "was struggling along with it, going slowly with it. 'How about if I read the next page?' Sometimes I can entice her. I'll read one page and she'll read the next page. And we'll go off like that. That's about the ony way I'll get her because she wants to be in there doing it. She's not a sideline participant."

The use of the term "sideline participant" by this Craftsman is very revealing and is grounded in her belief that reading is decoding. This perspective would hold that only the reader is actively participating in the reading event; it does not consider the listener to be an active participant. This is one reason why Craftsmen encourage their children to become independent readers as quickly as possible. The consequences of adhering to such a tenet would, of course, affect the strategies used in reading aloud. During-reading strategies that are engaged in by Craftsmen seek to provide temporary assistance to these young readers until they become skilled enough to read entirely without help.

While Craftsmen do not see "listening" as a valuable activity for their children during reading aloud events, they do use it as a during-reading strategy. It is a role, however, that Craftsmen reserve for themselves. Mrs. Clark explained that, when her son is especially interested in a book, he will sit down near her and say, "... Mom, did you know that...", and then she will listen to him as he reads to her.

The use of post-reading strategies by Craftsmen parallels their use of prereading strategies; they are not common practices. Since their roles in reading aloud are often limited to providing decoding assistance during the actual reading of the material, they are not often presented with opportunities beyond that time, such as in post-reading.

The Novices

By definition, novices are people who are inexperienced or untrained in a particular area. In this study, parents who are called Novices are those parents who do not engage in reading aloud events with their first-grade children. The characteristics of this group are influenced by the ethnicity and the gender of the parents in it. Consequently, this group of parents is very diverse; parents in this study who were categorized as Novices included a Hispanic mother, an Indian mother, and a single-parent father.

Novices want their children to be successful in school; however, they do not use reading aloud as a tool to achieve this goal. While data gathered from all other groups of parents in this study indicated that they perceived reading aloud activities as methods that somehow develop their children's literacy levels, Novices alone did not. Furthermore, Novices have not displayed any of the other purposes for reading aloud that were found in other groups of parents.

This section will first present profiles of three parents and will then address the areas of purposes for reading aloud, materials, and strategies.

Parent profile: Mrs. Mendez. Mrs. Mendez and her husband were both born and raised in Mexico; both left school after the fifth grade. The Mendezes and their five children, ranging from two to fourteen, have been in the United States about two years. Their middle child, a first-grade daughter, is in a bilingual reading program. Mrs. Mendez is not employed outside the home and is not fluent in English.

In an interview, Mrs. Mendez told a translator that she reads two or three times daily to her first grader. Furthermore, Mrs. Mendez stated that she reads "magazines, newspapers, and books, even novels. There is no evidence to corroborate this; in fact, all other evidence is contrary. The translator, a teacher who is well-acquainted with this parent, explained that Mrs. Mendez's response was most likely an attempt to please school personnel.

Parent profile: Mr. Pazzo. Mr. Pazzo is a divorced father of a ten-year-old daughter and a seven-year-old son, who is in first grade and is in a high reading group. These children live with their father; no day care outside of the home occurs. Mr. Pazzo completed high school and is a small business owner.

Because Mr. Pazzo was unable to find time to be interviewed, no data on Mr. Pazzo's early or current reading experiences were gathered. Journal data, which was collected for a four-week period, did not reveal any instances in which this parent read to his first grader.

Parent profile: Mrs. Patel. Mrs. Patel and her husband are Indian and speak Gujarati and English. She is a college graduate and does not work outside the home. Her husband is a scientist with a Ph.D. Their only child, a daughter in first grade, speaks English as her primary language. She is in the lowest reading group.

Since Mrs. Patel returned to India for an extended vacation, no data on the early or current reading experiences of this parent were gathered.

Although survey data indicated that both parents frequently read to their daughter, journal data revealed only instances of the first grader reading to her mother. The journal was kept by Mrs. Patel for a one-month period, until it was completely filled.

Purposes for reading aloud. Novices do not read aloud to their children, mainly because they do not perceive reading aloud as a means to advance their children's literacy levels. In addition, they exhibit none of the purposes for engaging in reading aloud that were found in other groups of parents. On the contrary, no purposes for reading to their children were found in this study.

When examining why Novices do or do not read aloud to their children, ethnic groups and gender are variables to be examined. The results of the survey, as displayed in Table 7, show that some ethnic groups in this study do not read as frequently to their children as other ethnic groups. In addition, data gathered in this study through surveys, interviews, diaries, videotapes, and stimulated recalls have shown that it is not a common practice for fathers to regularly read aloud to their children. Consequently, for those children who are part of households headed by single-parent fathers, such as Mr. Pazzo, reading aloud may not occur as frequently as it does in families in which mothers are present.

In this study, Novices exhibited a behavior also identified with one Laborer; they did not distinguish between the terms "parents reading aloud to their children" and "children reading aloud." This was illustrated in the diaries that parents were given to record their reading aloud experiences with their first graders. Invariably, the diaries of Novices recorded something other than "parents reading aloud to their children." These diaries of Novices were either summaries of books that the first graders had read independently and had recorded in the diaries with the assistance of someone other than parents (such as those of Mr. Pazzo and Mrs. Mendez), or they were records of sessions in which the children read to their parents (such as that of Mrs. Patel). No diaries of Novices recorded sessions in which parents read aloud to their children. Furthermore, it was not uncommon to find that Novices had refrained from completing the journals and, instead, to find that the journals had been completed by someone other that the Novices, such as a grandmother (Mr. Pazzo) or a sibling (Mrs. Mendez).

Reading aloud materials and the selection process. Novices do not own a wide variety of reading materials that are appropriate for use with first graders. Furthermore, Novices do not have many sources for securing such materials.

Books are not common purchases for Novices, most likely because these parents do not realize their potential benefits, and quite often because the costs are prohibitive. The schools have become dependable sources of reading materials for Novices, either from the school library or from a classroom teacher.

For some groups of Novices, materials suitable for use by these parents and their first graders may also be restricted because English is not their primary language. Unfortunately, even when the public library's bookmobile made books available that were in Mrs. Mendez's primary language, the opportunity was not taken advantage of by that parent.

The materials owned by Novices that are appropriate for use with first graders are often easy readers, such as N. Bridwell's Clifford books (see Table 11). However, because the school is a main source of materials, the children of Novices bring home other kinds of reading materials, such as nonfiction books. One journal revealed that Mr. Pazzo's first grader had brought home books on great white sharks, chameleons, crocodiles, and alligators.

Strategies used when reading aloud. Since parents-as-readers is not a commom practice for Novices, their children are not exposed to those strategies peculiar to parents-as-readers' experiences that could enhance the literacy development of these children.

The Eclectic

One definition of eclectics is persons who choose or select from various systems or sources. When parents are classified as Eclectics, prominence is given to the fact that their reading aloud styles are composites of characteristics commonly ascribed to other parent categories.

It is also intended to highlight the possibility of movement from one category to another. Movement may occur for a variety of reasons, and may originate from changes in parents and/or their children. Changes in children include changes in their levels of literacy development or in their interests. Parental changes may stem from a wide array of changes, a few of which are divorce, returning to work, or having a baby.

The reading behaviors of the one parent in this study who represents this group of parents are truly eclectic. Although she no longer routinely reads to her child, she is not a Craftsman. Although she consciously strives to cultivate a love of reading in her child, she is not an Artist. Although she is very concerned about the intellectual and academic growth of her child, she is not a Professional.

Materials and strategies that are used by this parent and her child are further evidence of this eclecticism. Like Professionals, many of the books they use are highly challenging materials; yet, unlike Professionals, this parent does not retain her position as a primary reader when using these reading materials. While Craftsmen occasionally resume their roles as primary readers, this Eclectic does not.

This section will commence with a profile of this Eclectic and will then examine her reading aloud purposes, materials, and strategies.

Parent profile: Mrs. Burke. Mrs. Burke, a divorced mother of three who will remarry shortly, is a junior-high teacher. Her children are a ten-year-old son, and two daughters, aged eight and six. The youngest is in first grade and is in a high reading group.

As a child, Mrs. Burke recalls "going to the library and checking out twelve books and I remember in the summer sitting down and going through stacks of books. I was a voracious reader. So was my sister. I read a lot of novels and books all through."

Although Mrs. Burke does not remember being read to, she does recollect "reading to my brother. I'm the oldest. I was eight when he was born....He still remembers me reading him _The Cat In The Hat_! So that was fun."

Presently, Mrs. Burke reads "things related to my subject area. I don't read the paper at home at all. I cancelled that because I didn't have time for it." Mrs. Burke enjoys reading novels but usually finds that she only has time for them in the summer. She describes herself as "kind of a 'pick-up' reader. I'll pick up magazine if they're lying around."

Although Mrs. Burke continues to occasionally read to her oldest child, a ten-year-old, she does not read to either of the two younger children. For a while, her eight-year-old daughter replaced her as primary reader for her youngest child, the first grader. Currently, this first grader engages mainly in independent reading.

Purposes for reading aloud. The purposes for reading aloud found in this Eclectic are a composite of behaviors found in other parent groups described in this study, in particular, Craftsmen and Artists. Like Craftsmen, this Eclectic has not continued as a primary reader in her first grader's reading events. Like an Artist, she strives to inculcate a love of reading in her child.

Craftsmen read aloud to their children until their children begin to display decoding abilities. When that occurs, they do not continue as primary readers for their children and, instead, allow their children to assume positions of primary readers. Mrs. Burke exhibited this Craftsmen-like behavior when her first grader began to display such decoding skills; she did not continue as a primary reader.

Nevertheless, while Mrs. Burke may have demonstrated Craftsmen behavior, her purposes for doing so were not the same as those of typical Craftsmen. The primary goal of Craftsmen is to help their children become independent readers. Mrs. Burke did not have that purpose. Instead, her purpose was the same as those parents who are described as

Artists. Artists' primary purpose for reading to their children is to share their love of reading with their children and to nurture this feeling in them. Mrs. Burke's purposes reflect this goal of Artists. Recalling that period of time when she did read to her first grader, Mrs. Burke stated that her purpose was not to teach her child to read but "just to develop a love of books, the idea of what she could find between the covers of these books. Our whole family just loves books that way. And she's always enjoyed getting into new books. So I never had any specific goals in mind."

Again exhibiting Artist-like behavior, Mrs. Burke described reading aloud as "a wonderful stimulation, for their minds, their creativity." Unlike Artists, however, she does not routinely read to her first grader. Mrs. Burke read to her first grader until "....the beginning of this school year. When she entered first grade."

In a Craftsmen-like addendum to the survey, Mrs. Burke claimed that "my daughter is definitely not interested in being read to -she is a very excited reader and wants to read everything herself. She reads me A. A. Milne every night - this survey does not really reflect where she is right now." On the side she wrote, "I feel her critical "read aloud" time was much younger - especially ages 4 & 5." Ironically, Mrs. Burke still reads aloud to one of her three children, the oldest, a ten-year-old son. "And now we're doing King Arthur....it's always been just so much fun for both of us."

During the interview, the issue of "time" often permeated her conversation. When asked about her current reading, Mrs. Burke, sounding like an Craftsman, stated that she did not "have a lot of time for reading during the school year so, as far as my reading, it's probably rather limited." She had cancelled the newspaper "because I didn't have time for it." This parent also explained that she enjoys reading novels but only has time for them in the summer.

At another point, she stated, "And I even tried to read to her when I got your survey and I was so busy and she'd go, 'Oh, Mom, just let me read it and them we'll write it down!'"

"Time" was also a factor when Mrs. Burke explained her unproductive attempts to read to all three of her children together. Somewhat reminiscent of a Journeyman, Mrs. Burke related an incident that occured when her first grader was four and her other daughter was six. She read her eight-year-old son "all of the Narnia books when he was in second grade. We started out with all seven and, at night, I'd invite the girls, 'Would you like to listen in?' And we started The Lion, The Witch, and The Wardrobe. And a couple of times, I think, they did start out with us, and then they both just got bored. So I think there's something about the one-to-one reading, too. I mean, I know, I read that Read Aloud Handbook and everything. 'Oh, gather the family around. Find a good book.' But for me personally, I think there's more of a one-on-one when you're reading with children. Even though it's inconvenient and it's hard. Some kids, like Laurie and Katie, are just not interested in my reading to them."

At one point, typifying a Craftsman, Mrs. Burke claimed that "about half way through first grade, she was able to go right into chapter books and start reading them herself and she realy wasn't interested in listening to me read to her anymore." Later, Mrs. Burke described circumstances in which her older daughter, Laurie, read aloud to her first-grade sister. She explained that "there was a very short period of time, when she was kind of between Easy Readers and real books, when Laurie would read to her. The American Girl books. You know The American Girls. Oh, they're so hooked on those! They both have the dolls and there was a little period of time when Katie couldn't quite read those books quite fast enough to suit her and so Laurie read her those American Girl books."

Reading aloud materials and the selection process. While Mrs. Burke's primary purpose for reading aloud resemble that of Artists, and also while she has exhibited Craftsmen-like behaviors when she did not continue readling aloud to her first grader, Mrs. Burke's selection process is not the same as either of these two groups of parents. Her first grader frequently uses materials that are beyond her independent reading level, materials that are often similar to those used by Professionals as they read aloud to their children. Like Professionals, chapter books are the materials most often used by Mrs. Burke.

When asked if some books have more value than others, Mrs. Burke's response resembled that of a Professional. "Definitely, It's like TV. There's good TV. There's junk TV. It's like junk food, and I really do screen what they read."

Reflecting a common behavior of Professionals, Mrs. Burke actively participates in the selection of reading materials for her child, maintaining that it is not easy to pick appropriate books for her first grader. She sighed and said, "She's very tricky because she's young and yet she's a little bit ahead of her, her sort of emotional maturity in reading....She might pick out some teenage book -not that she's that far ahead of herself - but she might go into the junior fiction over there and pick out some book about some preteenager, you know. She's really not ready for that. It's very hard to find something....and they'll reject my choices and say, 'Forget it!' I mean, I tried to get her to read The Bobsey Twins and she said 'No way!' So I try to find something for Katie that isn't too easy. I rejected a couple of things today. She'll ask me, but they'll keep her interest. Yeah, she's kind of at a tricky stage for reading."

This first grader stopped reading easy readers last summer, before first grade. Chapter books, a typical selection of Professionals, are now the most common choice of reading materials. "She's gotten away from more the picture-type, easy-reader books into a book of story. She enjoys the idea of chapters but she likes them small, manageable. But she likes the idea of following a story."

Some chapter books that have been selected have proven to be frustration-level material for this first grader. Mrs. Burke explained that "she gets kind of impatient with them, you know, the idea of getting through a chapter book. She tried to read Matilda. She got about half way through it and she just kind of got bogged down."

In addition to chapter books, this first grader also rereads old favorites. These are less complex storybooks, such as M. W. Brown's Goodnight, Moon and The Runaway Bunny. Other recently read books were James and the Giant Peach by R. Dahl, and some from The Berenstain Bears series.

While examining different genres of books, this parent, comparable to an Artist, stated that her first grader is "not as interested in nonfiction" as she is fiction. Furthermore, Mrs. Burke reported that her first grader "is back into nursery rhymes because she loves the words. She is reading right now, funny you mention that, she is reading Now We Are Six....You have to read these out loud. They're so great!....She's really into reading poetry. On seeing J. Prelutsky's poetry book, The New Kid On The Block, Mrs. Burke remarked, "She loves that book!"

While Mrs. Burke subscribes to two children's magazines, neither is intended for her first grader. Mrs. Burke had not realized this prior to the interview.

Although Mrs. Burke occasionally purchases books for birthdays or Christmas, "they get into series and they just read so fast" that the library is the main source of books. Her first grader participates in the library's summer reading program and has her own card. Visits to the library are also influenced by the amount of time available. They are more frequent in the summer, "summer is totally different. We go two or three times a week. and school time, we might go once a month....In the summer, it's one of our main activities of the summer! I know, myself, I feel such a sense of relief that school's over."

Strategies used when reading aloud. Although Mrs. Burke does not regularly read to her first grader, she nevertheless employs reading strategies. When the children of Craftsmen become frustrated during independent reading activities, Craftsmen help their children to read the material. When too challenging material is encountered by Mrs. Burke's first grader, it is discarded. When shown a book commonly intended to be read to first graders, The Last Dinosaur, Mrs. Burke stated that "it would just discourage her to look at a book like that. So much print on the page. I think she would probably just reject it."

During reading strategies are sparse. Akin to an Artist, Mrs. Burke claims that she gave no decoding instruction to her child when she used to read aloud to her. In addition, there were no instances of reading instruction currently occurring in this first grader's reading events.

Another Artist-like strategy that was noted occurs during the reading of poems. This first grader, her mother explains, "loves the words," and "wants to read out loud if she reads poems."

Summary of results

This study reveals that almost all parents read aloud to their children in first grade, and that the parents most likely to be the readers are mothers. This study also found many differences among the decisions that parents make regarding reading aloud events with their children.

Decisions about the frequencies of these reading aloud events varies greatly among parents, ranging from once or twice weekly to daily. Additionally, this study found that occasions in which other persons read to these first-grade children are often less than once a week.

Although 73.8% of these mothers are employed either parttime or fulltime, 76.9% of their first-grade children come home to a parent after school. Interestingly, the percentages of mothers who work full-time and part-time who read three or more times a week to their first graders are quite similar to those of mothers who are not employed outside the home: 76.7% of the mothers who work full-time and 77.8% of those who work part-time read to their children three or more times per week, compared to 77.3% of the mothers who are not employed outside of the home.

While the majority of parents in this study are white, other ethnic groups account for almost 20 percent of the parents. This latter group includes mostly Asian and Hispanics, and only a few blacks. This study found that most parents, even many of those for whom English is not a primary language, read to their first graders in English.

This study also found differences in decision making among the various ethnic groups. While the percentage of Hispanic parents who read aloud three or more times per week is smaller than that of white, Asian, and black parents, the findings also show that the percentage of Hispanic children who read three or more times per week to their parents is greater than the three other ethnic groups.

Based on mothers' levels of education, this study showed that, generally speaking, the percentages of mothers with higher levels of education who have decided to read aloud to their children three of more times a week is higher than those of mothers with lower levels of education. When marital status is considered, this study showed that the percentage of married parents who read aloud three or more times weekly is higher than that of single-parent mothers.

This investigation also showed that storybooks are overwhelmingly the most commonly used books when parents read aloud to their children. Nonfiction books and chapter books, while selected much less frequently than storybooks, are the next most popular choices. This study also found that some genres are more popular with one ethnic group than another.

For example, nonfiction books and chapter books are used by white parents much more than Hispanics. Conversely, counting books are selected by a much larger percentage of Hispanic parents than white parents.

This study also showed that borrowing books from libraries is the most common source of materials for reading aloud to these first graders. The parents in this study also stated that both parents and children most frequently select materials for reading aloud events.

In addition to the surveys, this study also examined the data from the other sources, including interviews, journals, videotapes, and stimulated recalls. Variables (e.g., purposes for reading aloud) were selected and, for several of these variables, clusters of parents were observed. Based on these clusters, six descriptions of parents-as-readers were constructed. Four of these descriptions refer to parents who regularly read to their first graders and two refer to parents who do not. In addition, one parent who displayed behaviors found in several groups of parents was presented. Based on the perspective that reading to children is a job for parents, metaphors were assigned to each category.

Professionals. In general, professionals are described as people who have great skill in a specified role; they are highly informed about their field. When the term Professionals is used to describe a group of parents who read aloud to their children, it is to highlight the emplasis on higher cognitive processes that these parents give to reading aloud events. Parents who are called Professionals have retained their positions as primary readers to their first graders.

Professionals have multiple purposes for reading aloud and use a variety of materials and strategies to achieve their goals. Purposes identified in this study include stimulating the intellectual and academic growth of their children, developing desirable character traits, developing interfamilial relationships, and unwinding before sleep.

Professionals carefully select the materials they use when they read aloud to their children, They consciously select materials that are challenging for their first graders. In addition, Professionals use a wide array of prereading, during reading, and post-reading strategies as they read. These strategies frequently require their first graders to use higher levels of thinking.

Artists. The word "artists" is used to describe persons who do things that have form and beauty; they are aesthetically sensitive. Parents who are described as Artists are people who love reading, including reading aloud to their children. Because reading is an activity that gives them so much pleasure, Artists want to share this with their children and want their children to feel the same way about reading as they do. This is their most notable characteristic. As a result, Artists continue their roles as primary readers to their first graders.

Artists' foremost purposes for reading aloud are to share their love of reading with their children and to nurture this enjoyment in them. Artists also use reading aloud to develop interfamilial relationships, to bring closure to the day's activities, and to stimulate academic and intellectual growth in their children.

Materials and strategies that are used by Artists also reflect this focus on enjoyment. Materials are at first graders' current levels of comprehension. Strategies which encourage the active participation of the children, such as questioning and dramatic readings, are employed.

Journeymen. Workers who have learned a trade and are qualified to work at it but not at masters' levels are called journeymen. Parents who are called Journeymen do not feel pressured by outside forces to read aloud nor do they strive to reach specific academic or intellectual goals. They read to their first graders because they believe it is good for them. They also read to their children because both they and their children enjoy such activities. The children of Journeymen are joining their parents as readers.

The materials that Journeymen use are usually easy readers, books that will not be challenging to decode or to understand. It is not unusual for the books that Journeymen currently use with their first graders to have less complex story lines and simpler vocabularies than the materials they previously used when their children exhibited no decoding skills.

The use of prereading and post-reading strategies was not documented in this study. During-reading strategies were found. They did not, however, require higher-level thinking on the part of the children.

Laborers. Persons whose work is characterized largely by physical exertion are called laborers. Parents who are classified as Laborers are those parents for whom reading aloud to their first-grade is toilsome; it is a chore. Their children may or may not be joining them as primary readers.

Laborers have been told that reading aloud will help their children become better readers. That is their primary goal. However, they feel pressured into doing so. They also read to their children because reading aloud is an activity that their children enjoy.

The materials that Journeymen select reflect their purposes for reading aloud. These parents select books that they believe will further develop their first graders' decoding skills. Such materials include easy readers and other books with simple story lines.

Strategies that are engaged in are limited to during-reading strategies that require only low-level thinking, such as literal questioning.

Craftsmen. Peeple who are skilled in the mechanics of an art are called craftsmen. Parents who are called Craftsmen have identified reading aloud as a valuable tool that will help their children become independent readers. Since this goal has been achieved, Craftmen are not motivated to continue reading aloud to their children. Consequently, their children have replaced them as primary readers.

The materials that their children currently use include materials that they can easily decode independently. When materials are too difficult, these young readers will seek assistance. Ironically, as their desires to comprehend outstrip their abilities to decode, these children are beginning to revert to their original position of secondary readers.

Since Craftsmen have not retained their positions as primary readers, their use of strategies is, of course, limited. Paired readings is one that is used, especially when the materials are more difficult.

Novices. People who are inexperienced or untrained in a particular area are called novices. In this study, Novices are those parents who do not engage in read-aloud events with their children. To understand this group of parents, consideration must be given to ethnicity and gender. Unlike other groups of parents, Novices do not exhibit any purposes for reading aloud.

Unlike the homes of other groups of parents, the homes of Novices do not have many reading materials for children. A variety of reasons, including financial and language barriers, account for this.

The children of Novices were the only children in this study who were not read to at one time or another by their parents. Consequently, they have not been exposed to any of the strategies that the children of other parents have experienced.

An Eclectic. An electic is one who choose or selects from various systems or sources. Parents who are eclectic display a variety of reading aloud behaviors that are usually ascribed to other parent categories. One Eclectic parent emerged from this study. This parent exhibited characteristics of several groups, including Professionals, Artists, and Craftsmen.

Chapter V

DISCUSSION

While there is agreement among researchers, the educational community, and to a large degree, the general public that reading aloud to children is beneficial, there is no concurrence as to what the benefits of reading aloud are or how best to achieve them. Consequently, the purpose of this study is to examine the behaviors of one group of adults who read aloud to children to better understand their perceptions of reading aloud.

The group selected as the focus of this study is composed of parents who have first-grade children. This investigation looks at the decisions that these parents make as to why, what, and how they read to their first-grade children. More specifically, this study asks:

1. Why do (or don't) parents read aloud to first graders?

2a. What materials are selected?

2b. How do parents select materials to read aloud to first graders?

3. What do parents believe they need to do while reading to their first graders?

Based on these research questions, the findings of this study are discussed in this section under five headings: discussion of the findings, conclusions, implications, limitations, and suggestions for further study. In the discussion of the findings, there are two subdivisions, the survey data and the data from individual parents. In the latter, each of the six parent groups is presented under a separate subheading, where each group is also compared to other parent groups.

Discussion of the Findings

The Survey Data

Since the findings of the survey data are based on the responses of 286 of the 342 parents of first graders (83.6%) in an elementary school district, the findings offer reliable evidence about one group of parents as they read aloud to their first-grade children.

The surveys in this study were completed by parents in March and April, about two-thirds of the way through the school year. At that point in first grade, most of these children display at least some decoding abilities. Yet this study found that an overwhelming number of these parents continue to regularly read aloud to these children. In fact, over 70% of the parents who responded claimed that they currently read three or more times weekly to their first graders. Why these parents continue to read aloud and whether or not the frequency of reading aloud is changing as these children are exhibiting greater reading proficiency could not be determined from the survey data. (Data on these two areas were gathered from diaries, interviews, videotapes, and stimulated recalls.)

One of the most striking findings of this study is the high number of mothers who assume the primary responsibility for reading aloud to their children. In spite of the fact that over two-thirds of the mothers in this study work full-time or part-time, reading aloud is still "mom's job" in most families in this study. While many fathers also read aloud to their first graders, the majority of them assume a secondary role.

Frequency of reading aloud. Most parents who responded to this survey indicated that they regularly read to their first graders. However, varying degrees of differences among parents as to the frequency of such reading events were found. Little difference in frequency of reading aloud was found among mothers who work full-time, part-time, or do not work outside of the home. As a result, the employment statuses of these mothers' do not appear to be reliable predictors of how frequently mothers read aloud to their children.

Analyses of the survey data indicated that Hispanic parents in this sample do not read as often to their children as parents in the other ethnic groups, namely, white, Asian, and black parents. Conversely, analyses showed that children of Hispanic parents read to their parents less frequently than do the children in these other ethnic groups. These are not surprising findings when the education levels of these parents are considered. Many of the Hispanic parents in this study have low levels of education, often only a few years of elementary school. As a result, their own reading abilities are often underdeveloped, making recreational reading an activity that they do not appear to customarily practice either by themselves or with their children. Thus, reading behaviors which would encourage the children to imitate their parents and read aloud are not regularly modeled for these children. While parental reading aloud is not necessary for the development of literacy (Bloome, 1985), it has been found to be effective. Since reading aloud events occur less frequently in the Hispanic families in this study, it does not appear that Hispanic parents in this study rely on reading aloud as a tool to be used in developing their children's literacy as much as other parents in this sample.

As anticipated, this study found that a higher percentage of mothers with college or graduate levels of education read three or more times per week to their children than did mothers with lower levels of education. On the other hand, when the frequency of first graders who read aloud three or more times a week to their parents was examined, no pattern based on mothers' levels of education could be determined.

Frequency of reading aloud was also investigated by the marital status of mothers. Interestingly, the married mothers read aloud to their children more frequently than single mothers while the children of single mothers read aloud to their parents more frequently than did the children of married mothers. One explanation may be time constraints. As single parents, the time that is available for such activities as reading aloud to children or listening to children read aloud may be more limited than that of married mothers. Choices, such as those made by Mrs. Burke, the Eclectic in this study, may have to be made as to how that reading time should be spent. Consequently, decisions about reading aloud may be based on household management issues rather than reading philosophy issues. For example, single parents may listen to their children read aloud more often than they read aloud to their children because they can do other things while listening but not while reading.

Genres used in reading aloud. Based on the contention that the type of text selected may be a significant "setting event" that influences the content and style of interactions during reading aloud (Phillips and McNaughton, 1990), this study examined genres used in reading aloud. The use of storybooks was overwhelmingly the most popular choice of the parents in this study. The use of other genres was influenced by ethnicity and levels of education.

This study also found that some groups of mothers used certain genres more than others. The use of poetry books, nonfiction materials, and chapter books rises with mothers' levels of education. In addition, the use of certain genres is also influenced by mothers' ethnicity. While the use of storybooks is the most popular choice of parents, there is much variation among parents' second choices. Asian parents selected non-fiction books, white parents picked chapter books, Hispanic parents chose counting books, and black parents selected a variety of genres. This suggests that mothers with comparable education levels or ethnic heritages may select similar reading aloud materials.

These three genres, poetry books, nonfiction materials, and chapter books, often include more challenging materials than some other genres (e.g., counting and alphabet books) and generally allow parents many opportunities for creating dialogues that facilitate meaning. These genres invite parents to structure reading aloud events for their first graders so that they include more scaffolding strategies and make higher cognitive demands on children. In paticular, the switch from storybooks to chapter books is often a signal event, marking the instigation of higher cognitive demands on children. This suggests that the parents who regularly use these genres are more likely to design reading aloud events with their first graders in which such higher cognitive strategies are employed. This supports the findings of Yaden, Smolkin, & Conlon (1989) which identified the materials used in reading aloud as influencing children's literacy development.

Few parents specifically identified bookstores as sources of reading materials for their first graders. Almost twice as many identified stores or grocery stores as current sources of materials. One explanation may be that purchasing books from bookstores is not as convenient as purchasing books from other kinds of stores. These might also be economically-based decisions. Typically, many of the children's books found in bookstores, especially the hardcovered materials, are more expensive than those found in other kinds of stores. While parents may purchase more books from stores other than book stores, purchasing books is not a current major source of materials for the parents in this study. While books that are commonly found in other kinds of stores are usually less costly than those found in bookstores, the selection is often limited to books such as mass market books.

In a study of preschoolers' reading materials (Robinson & Sulzby, 1984), parents were asked to identify the source of their reading materials. Almost all parents maintained that they bought the books that they used. The library and the school were each identified by only one-third of the parents. While home libraries are still a major source of reading materials for the parents and first graders in this study, a shift to greater dependence on library books appears to have developed. This shift would reflect the changing needs of the children. As these first graders exhibit more conventional reading behaviors and as their interests in a wide array of topics are expanding, the volume of needed materials is increasing. The school and public libraries are attractive alternatives as sources of materials. Indeed, libraries emerged in this study as the most mentioned source of materials.

Parents in this study were also asked who selects the materials they use when they read to their first graders. Although recent research (Johnson, Conlon, & Smolkin, 1990) has shown that the kind of books selected can enhance or detract from frequency and duration of book use, parents in this study rarely claimed that they consulted with sources outside of the home, such as teachers, librarians, or others knowledgeable about children's books. For example, only 21 of the 286 parents identified "teacher" as a source. Obviously, when the majority of parents in this study are selecting books to read to their children, there is little imput from others.

Data From Individual Parents

Data gathered from the surveys was used in three ways: it provided background information for understanding the population being investigated; it identified parent groups from which individual parents were then selected for additional data gathering; and, it examined a large number of parents to learn more about frequency of reading aloud and materials used by parents. The survey data, however, can not determine why parents read to their children and why they use specific materials and strategies. These determinations are based on individual perceptions of what reading aloud is and are found in the data collected from individual parents. These perceptions of what reading aloud is determine why parents read (or do not read) to their children. In turn, these reasons for reading aloud determine the materials and strategies that parents use when they read to their children.

Holdaway (1979) found that "the major purpose from the parent's point of view is to give pleasure, and the parent is sustained in this behavior by the ample bonuses provided" (p.39). Traditionally, it has been the learning of decoding skills that has been stressed as the main "bonus" of reading to children (Durkin, 1966; Flood, 1977). However, recent research (Wells, 1986; Heath, 1983) has found that reading aloud has the potential to make deep and fundamental influences in all areas of children's development; reading aloud events are activities that permeate all areas of learning. While this potential exists, the actual influence reading aloud has on children's development varies from child to child, from parent to parent, and from one reading event to another (Bloome, 1985).

Kastler, Roser and Hoffman (1987) identified components such as settings, literacy events, and parent attributions that were found in the homes of successful first-grade readers. This study found that many of these components (e.g., library usage, bedtime reading) are not limited to one group of readers. The literacy experiences that individual children derive from reading aloud are highly dependent on decisions that parents make about reading aloud. Some decisions that parents make are more effective than others. The purposes that parents have for reading aloud, the materials they select, and the strategies they use in reading aloud all highly influence the literacy development of the children.

Based on their perceptions of what reading aloud is, parents make numerous decisions as they read to their first-grade children; in this study, those who make similar decisions have been grouped together in one of six categories. The six categories are Professionals, Artists, Journeymen, Laborers, Craftsmen, and Novices. In addition, parents who exhibit characteristcs of more than one category are called Eclectics.

While there is overlapping of purposes, materials, and strategies among categories, there are certain characteristics that set categories apart from each other. Parents in four groups regularly read to their first-grade children: Professionals structure reading aloud events to advance the academic and intellectual development of their children; Artists are primarily guided by their desire to instill a love of reading in their first graders; Journeymen read to their children but are not especially skilled at this job; and Laborers read to their children even though they do not highly enjoy reading aloud activities. In addition to these four groups of parents who regularly read aloud to their first graders, two groups of parents do not. Craftsmen used reading aloud to help their children learn to decode and now have no other reasons for continuing such activities: Novices have never regularly read to their children. A discussion of each parent category is now presented.

The Professionals. Professionals' chief reason for reading aloud to their first graders is to stimulate their intellectual and academic growth, in other words, to enrich the meaning making of their children. Bruner (1990) maintains that making meaning is making sense of the world about us; it is the objective of human cognition, and it is a process that we as humans are continuously engaged in. We are all meaning makers. By interacting with one another, we form a sense of what is canonical and ordinary in our culture which, in turn, is our schemata for making meaning of future events. Future events are interpreted by comparing them to these presently-held schemata. When deviations are encountered and incorporated into existing schemata, past experiences are reinterpreted. It is this cycle of interpreting and reinterpreting that accounts for cognitive growth and gives meaning to our lives.

All events that happen in our lives are stories; they are our own personal narratives (Bruner, 1990). These narratives are interpreted according to the existing schemata that individuals possess, and, consequently, the meaning that is given them is unique for each person. Reality is the distillation of all of our past narratives (Wells, 1986); we are the stories that have occurred to us (Rosen, 1986).

Some parents (e.g., Professionals and Artists) use reading aloud as narratives to stimulate the intellectual and academic growth of their children. While many narratives are experienced first-hand and are based on direct interactions with other persons and things, we, humans, are also able to construct narratives less directly, by sharing narratives with each other in verbal and written communications. We share written narratives by reading or listening to others read. Young children with limited or no decoding abilities. however, only have access to the written narratives of others when adult assistance is given, when adults read to them. Even when young children are not limited by their decoding abilities, they can benefit from having adults read aloud to them. When adults read to children, they have opportunities to use their own schemata as scaffolds to foster and enrich children's meaning making. This is stimulating the intellectual and academic growth of children and it is what occurs when Professionals read to their children.

Professionals explicitly realize that reading aloud offers opportunities that can be highly beneficial to their first graders' academic and intellectual growth. Kastler, Roser and Hoffman (1987) found that parents in their study had an implicit theory about reading development that guided their actions. While this was also found in some parents in this study, it is not characteristic of Professionals; their theories are explicit. Silvern (1985) found that parents who were aware of the specific benefits of reading aloud attached more value to the activity. The decisions that Professionals make about reading aloud support this finding. Professionals are highly cognizant of the potential reading aloud has for developing growth in their children and deliberately structure reading aloud events to meet these goals. Their first-grade children are already exhibiting accelerated decoding skills and, as a result, Professionals are free to concentrate on more cognitively demanding reading behaviors.

It is the materials and strategies that Professionals use that are the stimulants. Professionals often select challenging reading materials that make high cognitive demands on their children. One often used genre is chapter books, which are more abstract materials that focus on the text. When constructing mental images, chapter books force children to rely more heavily on their mental resources than do other genres, such as picture books; this enhances the level of meaning making for these children.

Wells (cited in Dombey, 1983) found that the dialogues between parents and children that occur in reading aloud are confined to reading aloud and are not found in other parent/child dialogues. Professionals carefully structure reading strategies to take advantage of these opportunities. Chapter books, with their more complex story plots, create opportunities for Professionals to structure these dialogues with their children so that they are cognitively demanding and provide their children with highly-developed models for thinking.

Scaffolding, which has been identified as a procedure which facilitates literacy acquisition (Snow, 1983; Thomas, 1985) is characteristic of Professionals' reading aloud events. By participating in such higher-level strategies as predicting and questioning, Professionals can structure dialogues between their first-graders and themselves that allow these young learners to operate on cognitive levels that they could not reach without adult assistance.

How children take what is being read and internalize it, in other words, how they make meaning, is largely controlled by these strategies Professionals use. Thomas (1985) referred to parents' attempts to structure dialogue to facilitate meaning of the printed word as one example of scaffolding. For Professionals, reading aloud is a scaffolding technique which provides them with opportunites to stimulate their children's intellectual and academic growth. While other parents, such as Artists, also are concerned about the intellectual and academic growth of their first-grade children, no other parents displayed behaviors that are so committed to stimulating this growth. As the classroom environment changes and students are required to make higher cognitive demands, the children of Professionals should be well-equipped.

The Artists. Artists read to their first-grade children because they love reading and want to cultivate this love in their children. This was the only group of parents who expressed such aesthetic purposes for reading aloud to their children. Like Professionals, Artists are also concerned about the intellectual and academic growth of their children, but they do not structure reading aloud events around these concerns. Since their children already display average to above average decoding skills, Artists do not feel the need to give decoding instruction as they read aloud. By cultivating a love of reading during these early years, it is hoped that these children will become adults who will rely on reading as meaning-making tools in their lives.

Artists' choices of materials are guided mainly by this love of reading. They use many genres, ranging from the more complex chapter books to easy readers. Unlike Professionals, however, it is not the complexity of the plot, nor the level of the vocabulary, nor the potential for making high cognitive demands that mainly (but not solely) determines which stories are selected by Artists. It is what Rosen (1986) calls "the power of the story." It is the power of the story to touch the feelings and thoughts of listeners that makes Artists select one book instead of another. Along with this reason, Artists also select materials that meet their other purposes for reading aloud, such as the development of intellectual and academic growth. As a result, books that offer opportunities for scaffolding, that make higher cognitive demands on children, and have the potential to raise the level of meaning making are part of Artists' repertoires.

Artists also use strategies that reflect their purposes for reading aloud. Strategies, such as questioning and discussing, that provide opportunities for extended dialogues between parents and children, are frequently employed by Artists. Like Professionals, Artists use these extended dialogues as scaffolding techniques to help their children in making meaning. However, Artists, in their determination to cultivate a love of reading that will only be fully realized when their children become adults, are not as concerned about the academic and intellectual benefits that can be immediately realized.

The Journeymen. In general, Journeymen read to their children because they believe that reading aloud is a good thing to do for their children. In particular, they believe that reading aloud will help their children become better readers. Historically, the term "better readers" has been synonymous with "better decoders." Journeymen are not sure how this transpires, but they tacitly believe that reading aloud will have a positive effect on the literacy development of their first graders. Since their children are often in average or below average reading groups, Journeymen continue to read to their first graders. Unlike Professionals and Artists, their reasons for reading aloud are not well defined, and as a result, Journeymen lack strong motivations for achieving their goals. This group of parents does not capitalize on the potential reading aloud has to help children make meaning in their lives. In contrast to Professionals and Artists who envision reading aloud as a way to stimulate academic and intellectual growth, Journeymen are not skill oriented.

The materials used by Journeymen as they read to their first graders reflect their purposes. Consequently, the books that are selected are not highly challenging materials but are materials that encourage the growth of decoding skills, such as easy readers.

While the strategies that Journeymen use, such as questioning, are often the same strategies used by Professionals and Artists, the actualizations of these strategies by Journeymen are at lower cognitive levels. One example is the use of questioning. When Journeymen read aloud, questioning is often initiated by the children. When Professionals and Artists read aloud, questioning is initiated by both parents and children and is a part of their parent/child dialogues. In these dialogues, parents can provide models to children of higher level thinking. When questions are initiated mainly by children, which is what frequently occurs in Journeymen's reading aloud, parental opportunities to develop such higher level thinking for children are diminished. As a result, cognitively demanding tasks are less frequent and the children are provided with fewer models to imitate.

Journeymen's beliefs about the development of literacy in their children are based on a perspective that is very different from that held by Professionals and Artists. Professionals and Artists exhibit behaviors that espouse an emergent literacy perspective and are aware of the enormous potential reading aloud has. This perspective holds that literacy can be developed through interactions with adults such as those that occur when parents read aloud to their children (Teale & Sulzby, 1986). On the other hand, Journeymen are a parent group that exhibits behaviors more closely identified with the traditional perspective of reading readiness which attaches more importance on decoding skills, and holds that what happens to children prior to formal instruction in reading is irrelevant and that children must master a set of basic skills which are prerequisities to reading (Teale & Sulzby, 1986). While an increasing number of parents are becoming aware of the emergent literacy perspective, adherence to a reading readiness perspective is still widesperead. As a result, it can be speculated that Journeymen are still the prevalent category of parents.

The Laborers. Laborers are a new phenomenon, a product of the emerging literacy perspective currently being espoused. A generation ago, parents who read to their children did it because they liked or loved reading to their children. Reading aloud as a way to advance the literacy level of children was generally not a widely-held concept. Since that time, it has become popular to encourage parents to read aloud to their children, Consequently, some parents, who a generation ago would not have been reading aloud to their first graders, currently read to them. Many of these parents are now Laborers.

Although Daisey (1990) found that most parents read to their children for enjoyment, Laborers equate reading aloud with the development of children's decoding abilities. Their children usually have low decoding skills; that is why they read to their children. The sooner their children become successful decoders, the sooner Laborers can cease reading aloud; teaching decoding becomes their escape mechanism. Like Journeymen, they do not understand how this cause-and-effect relationship operates, but they too believe in its existence. Unlike Artists and Professionals, concern about their children's meaning making is not a conscious or tacit purpose for Laborers.

Laborers do not enjoy reading aloud but feel pressured to do so. Like the parents in Guinagh's research (1971), Laborers see reading as a dichotomy, either you read or you do not read. Irregardless of what occurs during their reading events, Laborers can claim that they read to their children; this removes the pressures that have been placed on them.

Whereas Artists relax by reading aloud to their children, Laborers hurry to finish reading aloud so that they can then relax. Laborers' negative attitudes about reading are likely to be passed on to their children. The messages received by the children of Laborers are reinforced with each and every reading aloud event.

Materials selected by Laborers are less challenging than the materials selected by other parents who read aloud to their first graders. However, the materials that are chosen foster their purposes. Books have simple plots and vocabularies which refelect the Laborers' beliefs that the goal of reading aloud is to improve decoding alibities. This is unfortunate for the children of Laborers because children model their responses to the text after that of their parents (Roser & Martinez, 1985). When parents select text that are mainly concerned with developing decoding skills, opportunities to structure high-cognitive dialogues are scarse.

While such parent behaviors as extending ideas and questioning have been found to contribute to children's learning how to read (Flood, 1977; Shanahan & Hogan, 1983), few of these strategies were found in Laborers' reading aloud events. Strategies that are used, such as labeling, make few cognitive demands on these first-grade children. Unlike the parent/child dialogues that occur in the reading sessions of Artists and Professionals, dialogues between Laborers and their children are confined to less challenging strategies, such as commenting, which afford Laborers few opportunities for scaffolding beyond the literal level. In addition, modeling of such skills as critical thinking are not available in the reading aloud events of Laborers. While the children of Artists and Professionals have many opportunities to construct meaning on high-cognitive levels, the children of Laborers are exposed to few such encounters. As a result, patterns of meaning-making that operate on low cognitive levels are established and reinforced.

The Craftsmen. Craftsmen are one of two groups of parents who do not read to their first-grade children. However, unlike the other group, Craftsmen used to regularly read to their children. Like Journeymen and Laborers, Craftsmen see themselves as surrogates for their children until their children are able to read independently. What sets them apart from these two groups is the fact that their first-grade children are already exhibiting above average decoding skills. Their purposes for reading aloud are largely achieved at this point. While parents often deny giving reading instruction (Bus and van IJzendoorn, 1988), Craftsmen do not.

Since the children of Craftsmen are still in the process of becoming independent readers, materials that are currently used by these children are often less challenging than the materials that their parents used to read to them. This was the only group in which this phenomonon occurred. Moreover, the first-grade children of Craftsmen appear to be in an in-between stage; the development of their decoding abilities is sometimes lagging behind their interests in the content of some reading materials. When these children experience frustrations in decoding such materials, their parents appear to be resuming more participatory roles in reading aloud events.

Craftsmen share concerns about their children's academic and intellectual growth with other parents, such as Artists and Professionals. Unlike these two groups, Craftsmen do not see themselves playing active roles in such growth. Consequently, Craftsmen do not use reading aloud events to structure opportunities that require their children to engage in high cognitive thinking.

Readers have "a limited resource capacity" (Perfetti, 1975), meaning that they can only hold a finite amount of data in their short-term memories at one time. When readers must focus on the nonmeaningful aspects of reading (viz., decoding), they may lose the meaningful aspects (viz., comprehension) of the text (LaBerge & Samuels, 1974; Perfetti, 1975). As a result, when young readers such as these first graders read, the process of decoding may make such high demands on their "pool of attention" that there is little of it remaining for comprehension. When the children of Craftsmen need to give much of their attention to decoding, they are not as free to attend to making meaning as are those first graders who are still being read to.

Furthermore, without adult assistance, collaboration is not possible and many opportunities for higher-level meaning making are lost. For these children, reading has become a solitary experience. Opportunities for stimulating parent/ child dialogues are missed. Scaffolding is nonexistent and the children must "pull themselves up by their own bootstraps."

Like the children of the Professionals, the children of Craftsmen currently have advantages in the classroom because of their accelerated decoding abilities. While the children of Professionals will continue to receive parental assistance on a high cognitive level, the children of Craftsmen may not. As the emphasis in the classromm shifts from decoding skills to higher cognitive skills, it is uncertain whether or not the children of Craftsmen will retain these current academic advantages.

The Novices. Novices, like Craftsmen, do not read aloud to their children. However, unlike Craftsmen and other groups of parents, Novices have never regularly engaged in read aloud activities with their children. Novices do not perceive reading aloud to be a way to develop their children's literacy skills or to be a way to assist their children in meaning making.

Although their children often have low decoding abilities, Novices do not use reading aloud to model these skills for their children. Frequently this is because the decoding skills of the parents themselves, especially those for whom English is not their primary language, are also low. As a result, the category of Novices is influenced by the ethnicity of parents more than any other category of parents.

Not all children of Novices exhibit low decoding abilities. One child of a Novice father in this study, Michael, is in an above average reading group. Michael is evidence that reading aloud is not a "prerequisite for literacy" (Bloome, 1985).

One of the numerous advantages of reading aloud occurs when parents connect what occurs in books to experiences in children's lives (Becher, 1986). These connections give new meanings to text; the text is less abstract and has concrete meaning for these young learners. When children collaborate with their parents in these kinds of activities, they are given opportunities to transform their reading experiences into their own personal experiences and expand their existing knowledge base. As a result, children can more easily interpret what is being read and incorporate it into their existing schemata. These are opportunities to move meaning making beyond the literal level. Unfortunately, the children of Novices do not participate in such literacy activities that are available to children who have parents in some of the other categories.

Nevertheless, it must be stressed that, while reading aloud sessions are common methods used by parents to develop their children's literacy levels and to raise the levels at which their children make meaning, reading aloud events between parents and their children are not the only experiences that children can participate in which will offer these opportunities. Other collaborative activities, such as verbal discourse between parents and children, have unlimited potential to help children make meaning at higher levels. The literacy-developing potential of such activities as visiting zoos, writing letters to grandparents, and participating in buying groceries must not be overlooked.

The Eclectics. It is probable that the purposes, materials, and strategies used in reading aloud can be blended together in many combinations and that several kinds of Eclectics exist. Nevertheless, only one Eclectic, Mrs. Burke, was found in this study. Mrs. Burke no longer reads to her first grader, but she is not a Craftsman; she loves reading but she is not an Artist; she nurtures her child's academic and intellectual growth but she is not a Professional. Instead, Mrs. Burke blends characteristics of all three of these kinds of parents-as-readers into a unique style that is workable for her child and for herself.

Mrs. Burke continues to read aloud to her oldest child, a ten-year-old son. As a result, her reading aloud relationship with him is quite different from her reading aloud relationship with her first-grade daughter. Mrs. Burke has undergone many parent-centered changes (changes in employment status, divorce, anticipated remarriage) that might partially account for these variations. Child-centered changes (e.g., children's interests and children's decoding abilities), and factors which were not addressed in this study, such as children's intelligence and health, might also influence these relationships.

It is also possible that Eclectics may be parents whose reading styles may be in transition from one category to another, causing them to simultaneously exhibit characteristics from more than one category. Eclectics may also be parents whose reading aloud behaviors are inconsistent; they may never fit neatly into any one category, and instead may always be a blend of categories.

This study found that mothers' employment cound not be relied on as a predictor of how frequenly parents read aloud to their children. This study also found that married mothers read aloud to their children more frequently than single mothers while the children of single mothers read to their parents more frequently than did the children of married mothers. This suggests that, while Mrs. Burke's fulltime employment may not influence her reading aloud style with her first grader, her status as a single parent may partially account for her eclecticism. Given the amount of time that this single parent can devote to her reading relationship with her child, her eclectic blend meets her needs. Some activities to which Mrs. Burke allots time are listening to her first grader read aloud, and overseeing the kinds of materials that are used by her child.

Based on factors such as marital status, ethnicity, and levels of education, it is possible that there are other kinds of Eclectics.

Conclusions

Based on the three research questions of this study, the following conclusions seem to be justified:

1. While children make meaning from all reading aloud events, the cognitive levels at which meaning making occurs are strongly influenced by the decisions parents make about purposes, materials, and strategies.

2. While the frequency with which parents read aloud has

traditionally been emphasized, it is the decisions about the act of reading aloud that are more related to the effectiveness of these activities.

3. Parents have a variety of purposes for reading to their first-grade children. Some of them are intended to develop low level skills such as decoding; others are intended to make high cognitive demands which will result in intellectual and academic growth. Some parents are conscious of the potential reading aloud has and recognize it as a valuable tool in meaning making on a higher level and the development of literacy, that it is more than simply a way to enhance decoding skills. Other parents operate more tacitly.

4. The materials that parents select for reading to their first-grade children reflect their purposes for reading aloud. Less challenging materials, such as easy readers, are often selected to develop decoding skills. More chalenging materials, such as chapter books, are often intended to stimulate intellectual and academic growth.

5. The strategies that are employed also reflect parents' purposes for reading aloud to first graders. Some strategies, such as those intended to advance decoding skills, generally make low cognitive demands on children. On the other hand, strategies such as predicting and questioning give parents more opportunities to make high cognitive demands on their children.

6. While analyses of survey data found that the variables of ethnicity, levels of education, and marital

statuses are related to the frequency of reading aloud, these variables cannot predict why individual parents read aloud (or do not read aloud) to their first graders. Furthermore, these variables cannot predict the materials and the strategies that individual parents will employ.

7. A number of patterns on parent decision making in reading aloud emerged in this investigation. Based on these patterns, parents in this study can be placed in one of six categories.

8. Parents may move from one catefory to another based on parent-centered developments, such as changes in employment status, and also on child-centered changes, such as changes in decoding abilities. Furthermore, as the Eclectic Mrs. Burke demonstrated in her reading aloud interactions with her son and with her first-grade daughter, it is also possible for a parent to simultaneously exhibit characteristics of more than one category.

Implications

While reading aloud is not a prerequisite for literacy development, it can be a contributor (Bloome, 1985). This study has found that those contributions can be influenced by the decisions parents make about reading aloud. However, all parental decisions do not necessarily contribute positively or equally to children's literacy development. More parents need to know that the frequency of reading aloud is not the key, that the success of reading aloud is highly influenced by the decisions they as parents make regarding purposes for reading aloud, materials selected, and strategies used before, during, and after reading aloud. Like the Professionals and the Artists, more parents need a philosophical and theoretical framework on which to base their decisions. By having such a framework, which would include knowledge such as the descriptions of parents provided in this study, parents themselves could make informed decisions about their purposes, and then select materials and strategies that will help them reach their goals.

As the emergent literacy perspective becomes more popular, some parents (i.e., Laborers) feel pressured into reading aloud to their children; this affects their reading aloud events, often negatively. This pressure needs to be removed from parents. Parents need access to philosophical and theoretical frameworks on developing children's literacy so that they can either replace reading aloud with alternative activities that develop their children's literacy or make new decisions about reading aloud which will more positively influence their reading aloud events.

This investigation also found that schools contribute to children's literacy development at home through the weekly checkout of library books and by sponsoring an annual program to encourage parents to read aloud to their children. However, when asked on the survey to name all who help select the materials used in reading aloud, vey few parents identified teachers as sources. The schools may be missing additional opportunities to support parents' reading aloud decisions.

More than one instance was found in this study that the term "reading aloud" has different meanings for different persons. To avoid misunderstandings, it might be more appropriate to use the term "listening to stories" when discussing reading aloud events in which parents read to their children. In addition, this would highlight the roles of the children in these reading aloud events.

Limitations

There are several limitations inherent in this study. First, this is a descriptive study. It was not designed to establish cause and effect but to develop themes that could be useful in thinking about parent decision making in reading aloud.

Second, while the population that responded to the survey was large (286), the black population was low (5). In addition, the number of parents who participated in this study beyond the survey phase was limited to 16.

The birthdates and IQ's of the first-grade children of these parents were not foci of this study; neither were the children's personalities and interests. Consequently, questions that address these issues, such as questions on the influences of children's mental abilities or chronological age on parental decision making, or questions on the relationships between children's personalities or interests and reading aloud, were not examined.

Finally, while parents in the study came from all socio-ecomomic levels and represented a variety of education levels and ethnic groups, the majority of parents in this study were white and had above average education levels. The findings are limited to the group that was examined.

Suggestions for Further Study

This study, which examines the decisions parents make in the reading aloud process, was a first attempt at categorizing parents according to their reading aloud decisions. The categories emerged from the data and had not been anticipated when this study was designed. Additional studies which would focus on these categories and make changes and/or refinements in them are warranted.

This investigation was limited to parents of children who had completed most or all of first grade. Longitudinal studies are needed to examine parental decision making prior to and subsequent to first grade. Such studies could include child-centered changes, such as children's decoding abilities, children's interests, and the influences of schooling; they could also include parent-centered changes (i.e., the Eclectic in this study), such as mother's return to work, divorce, the arrival of a new baby, or health problems.

The possibility of relationships between reading aloud and children's reading abilities surfaced during this study. All of the first graders involved in this study belong to one of five reading groups; it was often noted that children in the same reading group also have parents who are in the same parent group. Research is needed to examine the existing relationships between the categories of parents and the reading abilities of these first graders. Efforts are also needed to also examine students beyond first grade to see if relationships exist between the reading abilities of students and the categories of their parents.

Finally, the effects of family dynamics on reading aloud were observed but were not a focus of this study. Consequently, research is needed that will investigate issues related to family-dynamics, such as why parents read aloud to one of their children and not another, and whether or not parents display variances in styles of reading aloud as they read to their individual children.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

March, 1991

Dear Longwood Parent,

Perhaps you have heard the saying "Parents are their children's first teachers." The more we know about the critical role parents play in their young children's achievement, the more we will be able to use this information to ensure student success.

As a kindergarten teacher in your child's school as well as a graduate student in Reading and Language, the role of parents in young children's early reading development is extremely important to me. Please help me explore this topic by completing the enclosed survey. Information obtained from this survey will be used in my doctoral dissertation at National-Louis University.

Superintendent Robert W. Duffy and Principal Maureen A. Nuss have given permission for this survey to be sent to all parents of first grade students at Longwood School. Individual responses will be held in confidence; information will not be shared with your child's teacher or with anyone else at the school. School administrators will only receive a summary of the total results. Numbers on the return envelope will enable me to know which parents have returned the survey and do not need to be recontacted.

I realize that you are busy working and raising a family. However, this is an opportunity for you to help all children, including yours and the other children children at Longwood, become better readers. Please take about five minutes today to complete this survey. I would appreciate having all surveys mailed back by this Friday, March 8. An addressed, stamped envelope hav been enclosed to make it easier for you.

Your input is extremely valuable and very appreciated.

Sincerely,

Eileen K. Owens

Queridos Padres de Familia de :

Quizas ustedes han oído el proverbio que dice " Los Padres son los primeros maestros de los niños". Mientras mas aprendemos sobre la importancia del papel que los padres juegan en los logros de sus niños, mas capaces seremos de poder utilizar esa información para el éxito del estudiante.

Como maestra del jardín de infancia en la escuela de sus niños y niñas, y como estudiante graduada en Lenguaje y Lectura, el papel de los padres en el temprano desarrollo de la lectura de los niños jovenes es extremadamente importante para mi. Por favor, ayúdenme a explorar este tema completando la encuesta incluida. La información que se obtenga de esta encuesta será utilizada en mi disertación doctoral en la National-Louis University.

El Superintendente y la Directora me han concedido permiso para enviar esta encuesta a todos los padres de estudiantes de primer grado en .

Cada una de las respuestas serán mantenidas confidencialmente; la información no será compartida con las maestras/os de sus niños/as ni con ninguna otra persona en la escuela. Los administradores de la escuela recibirán solamente un resumen de los resultados totales. Los números en los sobres de envío me permitirán saber qué padres han regresado la encuesta y no se necesite ser contactado nuevamente.

Yo comprendo que ustedes se encuentran ocupados trabajando y tomando cuidado de la familia. Sin embargo, ésta es una oportunidad para ustedes de ayudar a todos los niños, incluyendo los suyos y los otros en , para que sean mejores lectores. Por favor, dediquen cerca de cinco minutos hoy para completar esta encuesta. Les agradacería mucho si pudieran tener todas las encuestas de regreso para éste lunes, 11 de marzo. Un sobre con dirección y correo postal ha sido incluido para que les sea más fácil.

Su información es extremadamente valiosa y apreciada.

Sinceramente,

Eileen K. Owens

PARENT SURVEY

Please circle the appropriate answer or fill in the spaces.

1. Your relationship to your first grader: Mother Father
2. Your occupation: ______________________________
   Fulltime or Parttime Evenings or Days
3. Your spouse's occupation: ______________________________
   Fulltime or Parttime Evenings or Days
4. What is the highest grade in school you completed? _____
5. What is the highest grade in school your spouse completed? _____
6. Marital status: Single Married Divorced Remarried
7. How many years have you lived in this school district? __
8. Ages of sons (include first-grade sons) ______________
9. Ages of daughters (include first-grade daughters) _______
10. Your first grader is: A boy A girl Twins
11. Others who live in your home besides spouse or children:
    ____
12. Ethnic origin:
    White (Non-Hispanic) Asian Black Hispanic
13. Spouse's ethnic origin:
    White (Non-Hispanic) Asian Black Hispanic
14. Primary language spoken at home: English Other_______
15. Primary language read at home: English Other_______
16. Language used to read to children: English Other_______
17. After school, does your first grader:
    - ___ Go to a daycare center
    - ___ Go to a babysitter's house
    - ___ Go home to parent
    - ___ Go home to be watched by someone other than parent
18. Do you read aloud to your first-grade child? Yes No
19. If so, how often do you read to your child? ___________
20. How often does your first grader read to you? ___________

21. Who else reads aloud to your first grader? ____________
____

22. How often do they read to your first grader? ___________

23. Check the kinds of books that you currently read to your first grader:

____ Poetry Books
____ Storybooks
____ Counting Books
____ Alphabet Books
____ Non-fiction Books
____ Pop-up or Flap Books
____ Nursery Rhymes
____ Chapter Books
____ Magazines
____ Wordless Picture Books

24. Which one or two of the above kinds of books do you use most often? ______________________________

25. Where do you get the books that you read to your child?
____
____

26. Who selects the books for reading aloud?
(Check those which apply.)

____ Parent
____ Teacher
____ Other______________________
____ Child
____ Parent and Child

THANKS FOR COMPLETING THIS SURVEY!!

AS A PARENT, YOU CAN BE OF FURTHER HELP!! In addition to this survey, would you help by filling out some simple forms after reading to your first grader and by answering some questions about reading to your child? Hopefully, your participation will give you new insights into reading with your first grader.

Please check one of the lines below:

____ Yes! I will help.

____ No, I am unable to help.

ENCUESTA A LOS PADRES DE FAMILIA

Por favor encierre en un círculo la respuesta correcta o llene los espacios.

1. Parentesco con el niño/a de primer grado: Madre Padre

2. Su trabajo:______________________________
Tiempo Completo o Medio tiempo De noche o De día

3. Trbajo de su esposo/a:______________________________
Tiempo Completo o Medio tiempo De noche o De día

4. Cuál es el grado más alto que completó en la escuela?__________

5. Cuál es el grado más alto que su esposo/a completó en la escuela? ____________________

6. Estado Civil: Soltero Casado Divorciado Casado nuevamente

7. Por cuantos años ha usted vivido en este distrito escolar?______________

8. Edad de sus hijos (incluyendo el de primer grado)______________

9. Edad de sus hijas (incluyendo la de primer grado)______________

10. Su niño/a de primer grado es: Niño Niña Mellizos

11. Otras personas que viven en su casa además de sus niños y su esposo/a.____

12. Origen Etnico:
Blanco, no hispano Asiatico Negro Hispano

13. Origen Etnico de los esposos:
Blanco, no hispano Asiatico Negro Hispano

14. Idioma principal hablado en casa: Inglés Otro_________

15. Idioma principal que se lee en casa: Inglés Otro_________

16. Idioma que se le lee a los niños: Inglés Otro_________

17. Después de la escuela, su niño/a de primer grado:
____Va a un centro de párvulos
____Va a la casa de la niñera
____Va a la casa de sus padres
____Va a la casa para ser cuidado por alguien que no sea sus padres.

18. Le lee usted a su niño/a de primer grado en voz alta? SI NO

19. Si lo hace, con qué frecuencia le lee usted a su niño/a de primer grado?__________________

20. Con qué frecuencia su niño/a de primer grado le lee a usted?________________________________

21. Quién más le lee en voz alta a su niño/a de primer grado?________________________________

22. Con qué frecuencia le leen a su niño/a de primer grado?________________________

23. Marque las clases de libros que actualmente usted le lee a su niño/a de primer grado:

______Libros de Poemas
______Libros de Cuentos
______Libros de Contar
______Libros de Alfabeto
______Libros de Literatura

______ Libros con figuras de relieve o de tapas
______ Libros de canciones infantiles
______ Libros con capítulos
______ Revistas
______ Libros sin palabras

24. Cuál o cuales de los libros mencionados arriba usa usted con más frecuencia?____

25. Donde consigue usted los libros que le lee a su niño/a?
____
____

26. Quién escoge los libros para la lectura en voz alta? (Señale los que correspondan.)

______Padres
______Maestro
______Otro____________________
_____Niño/a
_____Padres y Niño/a

GRACIAS POR COMPLETAR ESTA ENCUESTA!!

COMO PADRES, PUEDEN AYUDAR AUN MAS!! Además de ésta encuesta ayudarían ustedes llenando algunos formularios sencillos después de leerle a su niño/a de primer grado y contestando algunas preguntas acerca de la lectura a su hijo/a? Tengo la esperanza de que su participación le dara una nueva idea de leer con su niño/a de primer grado.

Por favor marque una de las siguientes lineas:
______Sí! Ayudaré
______No, No puedo ayudarle.

APPENDIX B

DATE ________________ DAY ________________

STARTING TIME ____________ ENDING TIME ____________

LOCATION ________________________________

PARTICIPANTS ________________________________

WHO DECIDED TO READ AT THIS TIME? ________________

WHO CHOSE THE BOOK TO BE READ?________________

HAS THIS BOOK BEEN READ BEFORE? ________

IF SO, HOW OFTEN? ________________________

WHERE DID YOU GET THE BOOK? ________________

BOOK TITLE(S) ________________________________

____

DESCRIPTION OF THE SESSION ________________________

____

____

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APPENDIX C

Interview Questions For Parents Who Do Not Read Aloud

1. What were your early reading experiences?
2. What reading do you now do?
3. Do you now read to your first-grade child?
5. Have you ever read aloud to your child?
6. Why did you stop reading aloud?
7. When did you stop reading aloud?
8. What keeps you from reading aloud?
9. Does reading aloud to children make a difference? If so, how?
10. Does the school encourage parents to read to children? How?
11. Does anyone read to your child? Who?
12. Does your child ever ask to be read to?
13. Does your child have any books? About how many?
14. Does your child bring home books from the school library?
15. Does your child bring home books from the public library?
16. What would need to happen for you to begin reading to your child?

Interview Questions For Parents Who Read Aloud To Children

If a parent has more than one child, it will be necessary to remind them frequently during the interview that their responses must focus on their first grader.

1. Describe the kinds of reading that occur in your home.
2. What do you remember of your early reading experiences?
3. Were you read to as a child? Why or why not?
4. What other reading do you do besides reading to your child?
5. Why do you read to your child?
6. What are some benefits from reading aloud?
7. Where do you learn about those benefits?
8. Does the school encourage parents to read aloud? How?
9. How often do you read aloud? Does the amount change during the year?
10. How long is an average reading session?
11. Who else is present when you read aloud?
12. When do you usually read aloud to your first grader?
13. Where do you usually read aloud to your first grader?
14. Who else reads to this child? How often?
15. Does your child read to you? How often? Why?
16. Is that amount of time changing? How?
17. Who selects the books for reading to your child?
18. What are some things you look for when selecting a book for your child?
19. Do some books have more value than others? Explain.
20. Where do you get your books for reading aloud?

21. Do you get books from the public library?

What kinds of books do you get from the public library?

22. Does your first grader have his own card?

23. How often does your child go to the public library?

24. Does your child bring home books from the school library?

25. Do you buy books from a store?

What store?

26. Does your child belong to a book club?

Is there a book club through the school?

27. Does your child subscribe to any children's magazines?

If so, what kinds?

28. Does you child ever get books as a gift? From whom?

29. Name 2-3 books you have read recently to your child.

30. Why were those particular books chosen?

31. What is your favorite children's book? Explain.

32. What is your child's favorite? Explain.

33. Compared to the books you read to your child when s/he was in preschool, has there been a change in the kind of books you now use? Explain.

34. Compared to the books you read to your child when s/he was in kindergarten, has there been a change in the kind of books you now use? Explain.

35. Do you reread a book? Why/why not?

36. Which of these books are like those books that you read to your child? (Show various books.)

37. Why would you choose that book? (Ask this question for each book selected.)

38. Why wouldn't you choose that book? (Ask this question for each book not selected.)

39. Now I want to know more about reading aloud between you and your child. If I were sitting next to you as you read to your child, describe what might typically happen before you actually read.

(Inquire why particular decisions were made.)

40. Besides "reading the words", what else would I see during reading? Why would you do that?

41. What might happen after reading? Why would you do that?

42. What goals do you have as you read aloud to your first grader? Explain.

43. Have you changed the way you read to your child now that s/he is in first grade? If so, how?

44. What changes do you think will occur in second grade?

45. What has influenced this change?

46. What feelings do you experience as you read aloud to your child?

47. How does your child feel when s/he is read to? How do you know?

48. Can you think of any time when something happened that reminded you or your child of a story you read? Tell me about it.

49. Can you think of any time when something in a story reminded you of something from your life or your child's life? Tell me about it.

50. Do you give any reading instruction as you read to your

first grader? Why (or why not)?

51. If you do give instruction, describe what you do.

52. Is there anything else that you want to tell me about reading aloud to your child?

Based on the entries in individual diaries, additional inquiries will be made.

WOULD YOU BE WILLING TO VIDEOTAPE?

Children's Books Used in Parent Interviews

ABC Book: Wildsmith, B. (1963). *Brian Wildsmith's ABC*. New York: Franklin Watts.

Chapter Book: Milne, A. (1926). *Winnie the Pooh*. New York: E.P Dutton.

Counting Book: Ziefert, H. (1989). *Bears 1, 2, 3*. New York: Random House

Flap Book: Ziefert, H. (1985). *Nicky's Christmas Surprise*. New York: Puffin Books.

Manipulative Books: Moseley,K. & Courtney, R. (1988). *Pterosaurs: The Flying Reptiles*. New York: Grosset & Dunlap.

Shapiro, L. (1979). *Baby Animals* Los Anglees: Intervisual Communications.

Mass Media Books: Berenstain, S. & J. (1986). *The Berenstain Bears and the Week at Grandma's*. New York: Random House.

Korman, J. (1990). *Duck Tales Down the Drain*. Racine, WI: Western.

Nonfiction Book: Althea (1977). *Butterflies*. Essex, England: Longman.

Nonfiction Magazine: *Your Big Backyard*, National Wildlike Federation, January, 1983.

Poetry Books: *Nursery Rhymes* (1977). New York: Random House.

Prelutsky, J. (1984). *The New Kid on the Block*. New York: Greenwillow Books.

Storybooks: Eastman, P.D. (1960). *Are You My Mother?* New York: Random House.

Murphy, J. (1988). *The Last Dinosaur*. New York: Scholastic.

Wordless Book: Turkle, B. (1976). *Deep in the Forest*. New York: E.P. Dutton.